

JAIPUR CRISIS SHADOW OVER CONG PRESIDENT POLLS

To stall Pilot's CM plan, 90 Gehlot loyalist MLAs submit resignation

Want next CM to be from their camp, raise issue of Sachin Pilot's rebellion in 2020

HAMZA KHAN
& DEEP MUKHERJEE
JAIPUR, SEPTEMBER 25

CROSS OVER Congress high command's 'unilateral' decision to opt for a Chief Minister without consulting them, around 90 MLAs loyal to Ashok Gehlot submitted their resignation to Rajasthan Assembly Speaker CP Joshi late on Sunday. Gehlot is expected to file his nomination papers for the party president's post soon.

As the Congress high command's inclination to hand over the chief ministership in Rajasthan to Sachin Pilot became

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



apparent, Gehlot loyalist MLAs went into a huddle beginning

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Cong leadership caught off guard, rivals ask did Sachin overplay his hand?

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE DEFT power play by veteran Ashok Gehlot in full public glare in Rajasthan Sunday, after having announced his decision to contest for the high-stake Congress presidential election, has once again raised

questions on the party leadership's ability to manoeuvre decisions towards desired outcomes.

The Congress leadership — the Gandhi family — were caught off guard by the strategic play by Gehlot who emphatically signalled he would not be a pushover and would like to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

JOINT OPP RALLY: LEADERS SEEK UNITY AGAINST RULING PARTY

Congress absent, Nitish says it must be part of anti-BJP coalition

Rally organised by INLD attended by Pawar, Badal, Tejashwi

SUKHBIR SIWACH
FATEHABAD, SEPTEMBER 25

A JOINT Opposition rally held here in Haryana Sunday saw leader after leader seek a united front against the BJP, with JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar saying the Congress should be part of any such coalition. The Congress was not invited for the rally, organised by the INLD.

Apart from Nitish, the Bihar Chief Minister who recently left the NDA, the rally was attended by INLD supremo Om Prakash Chautala, NCP leader Sharad Pawar, the Akali Dal's Sukhbir Singh Badal, RJD leader and



Opposition leaders at the rally in Fatehabad, Haryana, on Sunday. Jasbir Malhi

Bihar Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav, CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury and Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant. The Trinamool

Congress said it had sent a representative. Also present was Mevar Kumar Jamatia of the

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Mukul Rohatgi turns down AG post: 'No specific reason'

Mukul Rohatgi was previously AG from 2014 to 2017

ANANTHAKRISHNAN
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

IN A surprising turn of events, Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi, who was learnt to have earlier conveyed his willingness to the government's request to be Attorney General of India, has declined the offer.

"True," he told *The Indian Express* when asked about the development. Asked what prompted him to change his mind, Rohatgi said there was "no specific reason", and added that he had taken the decision after

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Uttarakhand murder: Ante-mortem injuries, says report; protests held

AVANEESH MISHRA
RISHIKESH, SEPTEMBER 25

A PRELIMINARY post-mortem report of Ankita Bhandari — the 19-year-old whose body was recovered from a canal six days after she went missing from a resort where she was employed, in the Laxman Jhula area of Uttarakhand — has confirmed the cause of death as "asphyxia consequent upon ante-mortem drowning". It also reported injuries "suggestive of blunt force trauma".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



People protesting the killing of Ankita Bhandari block the Rishikesh-Badrinath highway. PTI



"The uniform system in colleges was not started by the BJP. No girl left because of the hijab issue"

BC NAGESH
KARNATAKA MINISTER OF SCHOOL EDUCATION, LITERACY & SAKALA

PAGE 17

TRUSTS RUNNING SHELTERS ANGRY AT GOVT FOR NOT RELEASING FUNDS

Let loose, cows on roads, in office premises in Gujarat

Calls for boycott of BJP in polls; minister promises solution

RITU SHARMA
AHMEDABAD, SEPTEMBER 25

THE COWS are coming home — and how — in Gujarat. Angry at the government for not releasing funds to registered cattle pounds and shelters, the chari-



Cows on the road in Patan district's Santalpur

table trusts running them are setting them free, often into government buildings. By Sunday, nearly 1,750 cowsheds run by such trusts, housing over 4.5 lakh cattle, had joined the agitation.

Amid calls to boycott the ruling BJP in the coming Gujarat Assembly elections, videos went viral of cows in thousands entering government buildings like offices of the sub-divisional magistrate and courts, in the talukas of Banaskantha.

On Friday, cattle were let loose on the streets in the north Gujarat districts of Banaskantha and Patan. In Kutch, on Sunday, those running the shelters handed over keys to the government, saying they would not

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

LUMPY SKIN DISEASE: NEARLY 1 LAKH CATTLE DEAD

PAGE 14

Back home after 9 yrs in captivity, Mumbai girl struggles with physical, mental scars

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

MOHAMED THAYER
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 25

HAVING GONE missing in 2013, 16-year-old Pooja Gaud was finally reunited with her family last month. However, the physical and mental trauma that she suffered during the nine years in which she was allegedly kept captive has meant that the days since her reunion with her fam-



(From left) Pooja, her mother Poonam and younger brother Rahul at their home in Mumbai. Mohamed Thayer

ily have been no fairy tale.

She was allegedly abducted by a couple on January 22, 2013, some distance from a Mumbai school. Her disappearance had led to a massive media campaign to find her. Over the years, she came to be known as Girl No 166 for being the only one, out of a total of 166 missing girls, to not be found by DN Nagar police station's assistant sub-inspector Rajendra Bhosle's team between 2008 and 2015.

On August 4 this year, Pooja finally managed to find her family

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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BEHIND THE ART: THE CREATION OF ADAM BY MICHELANGELO

The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo is based on an already-told religious story – the creation narrative from the Book of Genesis in which God gives life to Adam, the first man. So why was it so crucial to the renaissance period? What hidden messages does it still hold?

TECHNOLOGY



ONEPLUS NORD WATCH SPECS REVEALED

Here's what to expect from the budget wearable that will soon be available

ENTERTAINMENT



DELHI CRIME: GENDER CONSTRUCT IN INDIA

Cinema has portrayed female cops as diluted versions of male cops

EXPRESS AUDIO

Movie Police: In Kunal Kohli's Mujhse Dosti Karoge, beauty is skin deep

In the aesthetically pleasing world of Kunal Kohli's 2002 film, *Mujhse Dosti Karoge*, beauty is as skin-deep as the film's plot



BJP chief JP Nadda, Kerala BJP president K Surendran, party MP Prakash Javadekar and others pay tribute to Deendayal Upadhyaya on his birth anniversary, in Ernakulam Sunday. PPT

Nadda targets Kerala govt: 'Law and order situation worsening'

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
SEPTEMBER 25

HITTING OUT at the CPI(M)-led government in Kerala, BJP national president J P Nadda on Sunday said fringe elements were getting full support in the state, leading to lawlessness, and it is only the BJP that can save the people of the state.

"State government-sponsored lawlessness is going on in Kerala. The law and order situation in the state is getting worse. There is wide-spread violence and the people of Kerala are facing a very serious situation," Nadda said while inaugurating a BJP district committee office in Kottayam.

Urging party workers to strive for the growth of the BJP in Kerala, he said the BJP is the only party which can save the people of the state from this menace. "In democracy there is no room for violence, only for disagreement. The BJP is the only ideological party. In coming times, we can ideologically defeat both the Left and Congress. Lotus is going to bloom in Kerala," he said.

Slamming the state government, the BJP chief said, "The Pinarayi Vijayan government is a tainted government. It is tak-

ing people to debt. The gold smuggling scandal is engulfing the office of the Chief Minister... his office is directly involved in it. The government is neck deep in corruption."

Talking about opposition parties, he said all national parties have been reduced to state and regional ones. "They have shrunk and are not national parties. These days, the Indian National Congress is not an Indian party, it is not even a national party. It has become a brother and sister party. The rest keep clapping," he said.

Nadda said the BJP is now fighting regional parties, which are family parties. "All regional parties are neck-deep in corruption. We are the only party which is dedicated to ideology. In Jammu and Kashmir, we have PDP and National Conference, both are dynastic parties. In Punjab, we have Shiromani Akali Dal, which is a dynastic party. In Haryana, we have Chautalas, in UP, it is Mulayam Singh Yadav and Akhilesh Yadav, family party. In Haryana, all opposition parties are gathering today to celebrate Devi Lal," he said. "There are two things in common. All are family parties and are corrupt. You can understand which type of challenge BJP is facing."

Govt aims to issue 10 lakh Ayushman Cards a day: Mandaviya

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

FROM 4.5 lakh cards a day, the government aims to achieve the target of issuing 10 lakh Ayushman Cards a day. Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Sunday said at Arogya Manthan 2022, which marks the completion of four years of the insurance scheme and one year of digital health mission. More than 3.95 crore claims for Rs 45,294 crore have been processed under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. Under the scheme, over 19 crore Ayushman cards have been issued and more than 28,000 hospitals – 45% of which are from private sector – have been empanelled, according to data.

In just one year of the digital mission, more than 24 crore Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) numbers have been issued by the government. ABHA is a 14-digit number to uniquely identify people and create a digital health record.

At the inauguration of the two-day event, Mandaviya said, "Over 19 crore Ayushman Cards have been made spanning its coverage in 33 states/UTs, and more than 24 crore ABHA numbers have been generated... The current rate of making 4.5 lakh cards per day will be increased to making 10 lakh Ayushman Cards every day."

5,000 militants nabbed in Assam since 2011, only 1 convicted

TRIDEEP LAHKAR
GUWAHATI, SEPTEMBER 25

A TOTAL OF 5,202 militants have been arrested in the past 12 years from various parts of Assam, but only one of them has been convicted so far, according to official records. Also, only about half of those arrested have been chargesheeted so far. Experts said investigators and the legal system "are at fault", resulting in an inordinate delay at multiple stages of the justice delivery system.

The Assam Police arrested 5,202 cadres of ULFA and other extremist groups, comprising people from the Bodo, Garo, Rabha, Karbi, Adivasi, and Muslim communities, from 2011 to September 4 this year, according to official documents.

A total of 2,606 people have been chargesheeted in connection with the cases to date and "most of the cases are under trial and one person has been convicted", the documents said.

The conviction of the lone militant took place in Lakhimpur district in 2012. Of the arrested people, the highest 2,392 were from militant groups formed by Bodo people, followed by 1,468 from ULFA and 582 from Karbi groups. The police also arrested 346 people from Adivasi groups, 178 from Garo, 155 from Muslim, and 81 from Rabha communities. PPT

FROM PAGE ONE FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM
90 Gehlot loyalist MLAs submit resignation

Sunday afternoon to register their opposition. The MLAs started trickling into the Hospital Road residence of Cabinet Minister Shanti Dhariwal where they agreed on submitting their resignation to Assembly Speaker C P Joshi – signalling their protest against Pilot's name, instead of going to the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) meeting at the CM's residence.

In the afternoon, during his visit to the Tanot Mata temple in Jaisalmer, Gehlot told reporters: "It has been our tradition that whenever the CLP meets during elections or for the selection of a chief minister, a one-line proposal is passed that we are giving the right (to make the decision) to the Congress president. I believe this will happen today too."

The decision to empower the high command to take a call essentially meant agreeing to its

probable decision to go with Pilot – something unacceptable to Gehlot loyalists, who point out Pilot's rebellion and are also insecure about their position in the government if Pilot takes over. They want Gehlot to continue as the CM and the next best scenario is for someone else from their camp to become the CM.

Post the meeting at Dhariwal's residence, Independent MLA and Gehlot advisor Sanyam Lodha said, "The next CM should be from among the 102 of us who were in Fairmont Hotel (in Jaipur) and Suryagarh (resort in Jaisalmer, during the 2020 political crisis). It is our unanimous decision that none among those who conspired with the BJP to commit gaddari (traitor) and topple the government can be the CM."

The small, one-page resignation letter addressed to C P Joshi

reads that the concerned MLA is "wilfully" resigning from Vidhan Sabha and that the resignation should be accepted "without delay". Deputy Leader of Opposition Rajendra Rathore claimed that the resignation letters were not in the correct format as per rules.

Cabinet Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas said all the MLAs are "very angry". "Our demand is that Sonia ji and Rahul ji are our leaders, they should listen to our *dil ki baat* and understand," he said. "It is the unanimous decision of the MLAs that the high command should listen to us and take a decision. You could have called a (CLP) meeting after the 17th once the (party president) elections got over... CM says that he is our abhivhavak (guardian), so won't he give importance to MLAs?"

After submitting resignation letter to Joshi, MLA Babulal Nagar said that, "all the MLAs are unan-

imous that Ashok Gehlot should first become the CM, after that the MLAs should be consulted and then we will accept the high command's decision."

The CLP meet was scheduled to begin at 7 pm on Sunday but was delayed indefinitely, even though about 28 MLAs, including Pilot and some of his loyalists and neutral MLAs, reached the CM residence for the meeting.

Around the same time, Gehlot himself was busy meeting party observers, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, and party state in-charge Ajay Maken, at the Jaipur hotel where they are staying.

In Jaisalmer, Gehlot ticked all the right boxes by saying that "new generation" should be given a chance, that he will "brief the next CM" about the budget and that he is ready to relinquish the post of the CM.

● Cong leadership caught off guard, rivals ask did Sachin overplay hand?

remain the king in his backyard. This despite the fact that Gehlot had been very clearly indicating he would like the views of the MLAs to be heard on the issue of selecting his successor.

He was keen that a leader close to him be appointed the successor. He was against Sachin Pilot taking over and perhaps that was the reason for him to signal that he wants to continue as Chief Minister till he is elected Congress president.

The leadership perhaps misread the signals. Sources in the

Gehlot camp said the decision to call the CLP meet to anoint a new CM was baffling as the Chief Minister had not even filed his nomination paper for the post of Congress president.

Some Congress leaders had been of the view that Rahul Gandhi's public signal to Gehlot that he cannot hope to occupy both the posts was embarrassing to him (Gehlot) and in all likelihood an incoming Congress president.

It is not known whether Gehlot shared the view. That by

making his views public even before Gehlot met him at Kochi, Rahul, some leaders said, tried to cut the tactful veteran to size. Despite the pronouncement of neutrality by the Gandhis, most Congress leaders believe the family's blessings are with him.

Sources in the Gehlot camp claimed Pilot had been calling UP MLAs telling them he would be elected the CLP leader before Gehlot files the nomination. They say this prompted a reaction among the MLAs. So, did Pilot overplay his hand after getting a

signal from the Gandhis?

While this is a claim, the fact remains that AICC observer Mallikarjun Kharge and AICC in-charge of the state did not hold any meetings with the MLAs before the public showdown.

Talking to The Indian Express from Jaipur after the mini rebellion by the MLAs loyal to Gehlot – which even saw them threatening to resign en masse – Ajay Maken said Sonia Gandhi had instructed him and Kharge to elicit the opinion of MLAs. It seems like an afterthought.

● Cows on roads, in office premises

vote for the BJP in the elections.

Organisations *The Indian Express* spoke with said from Monday, similar agitations will be seen in the remaining Saurashtra and central districts of Gujarat.

With cattle taking over roads and government buildings, especially in Banaskantha – in some places for hours – it has been left largely to the harassed police force to clear them. Policemen chased them out with lathis, tried to reason with the protesters, as well as put up barricades to try to prevent their movement.

Raghavi Patel, the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cow Breeding, admitted the government was concerned about the protests and the underlying reason. "The CM sincerely wants that the issue should be resolved soon," he said.

Vipul Mali, the general secretary of the Gujarat Gau Seva Sangh, said: "We feel cheated. Despite promises made by the state government, the CM and several ministers, not a single paisa has been released till date. Meanwhile, donations have declined as people tell us why we need them when the government is giving Rs 500 crore."

the CM was a reference to the 'Mukhyamantri Gau Mata Poshan Yojana', under which Rs 30 is to be paid per cow and its progeny per day in the cow shelters of Gujarat.

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● Back home after 9 yrs in captivity, girl struggles with physical, mental scars

with the aid of a house help. Police later arrested Harry Joseph D'Souza, 50, for allegedly abducting Pooja, and also named his wife Soni, 37, as an accused.

Back home, Pooja faces various hurdles in letting go of the trauma of her period in captivity. She says that the physical abuse that she suffered has led to various physical ailments, and her psychological scars leave her crying late into the night as she recounts her ordeal to her mother. Her mother, Poonam Gaud, the family's single breadwinner, is struggling to make ends meet and has been taking loans to get Pooja medical help.

"A few days ago, we went to a doctor as Pooja's back was sore. She had difficulty sitting down after waking up in the mornings. Apart from that, she feels like there

are clots in her stomach. The doctor has given us pills and asked me to massage her back with hot water twice a day. All this is because of the abuse she faced during captivity," Poonam said.

Pooja says she had been beaten to the point of bleeding during her time in captivity.

"When I was in their captivity, I had to work for most of the day, so there was no time to even realise the physical damage I had gone through. Soni was physically abusive and every time I made some small mistake, she beat me up with a rolling pin or sometimes with a belt. Once she hit me on the head with a rolling pin and without even realising it, I had started bleeding and my clothes were soaked in blood."

"Due to these beatings and the

● Mukul Rohatgi

"second thoughts".

When it was pointed out that he had given his consent earlier, Rohatgi said: "That's why I said on second thoughts. The notification is not out yet. So..."

With the current incumbent K K Venugopal's tenure set to expire on September 30, Rohatgi, if appointed, would have been the 16th AG, his second time in the high office. He was AG from June 2014 to June 2017, before Venugopal took over.

Venugopal succeeded Rohatgi in July 2017 for three years. When his three-year tenure came to an end, 91-year old Venugopal had requested to be relieved of the post, citing his age. However, the central government requested him to continue and kept extending his tenure. On his third extension, Venugopal, indicated to the government that he did not want to remain in the office after September 30, when the term ends.

So the government scouted for other names, and picked Rohatgi, who was also in agreement.

The son of former Delhi High Court Judge Justice Avadh Behari Rohatgi, Mukul Rohatgi was ap-

pointed Additional Solicitor General in 1999 when late A B Vajpayee was the Prime Minister. He represented the Gujarat government in the Supreme Court in the 2002 riots cases. He was appointed AG when the Narendra Modi government assumed office in 2014.

As AG, Rohatgi defended, albeit unsuccessfully, the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act and the 99th Constitution Amendment, which provided for the establishment of the National Judicial Commission to appoint judges of the apex court and high courts.

In the Aadhaar case on use of biometric data, Rohatgi, as AG, set off a furore with his stand that an individual does not have absolute right over his or her body.

After Venugopal took over as AG, Rohatgi appeared for hotelier Keshav Suri in the apex court in 2018, challenging the constitutionality of Article 377. The senior advocate has also represented Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, NDTV promoters Pranoy Roy and Radhika Roy and Republic TV founder Arnab Goswami in different cases.

● Joint Opposition rally

IPFT, a tribal party that is a BJP ally in Tripura (IPFT sources claimed surprise at Jamatia's presence at the rally).

The rally was organised by the INLD as a major show of strength in its bid to make a comeback in the state, where it has fallen behind even its own breakaway faction led by Dushyant Chautala. The occasion was the birth anniversary of Haryana strongman and Chautala's father Devi Lal, who had made it to deputy prime ministership as part of an Opposition coalition. Many of the leaders present at Sunday's rally represented offshoots of that coalition.

Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik, who has been speaking out against the BJP government at the Centre, Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik and former Jammu and Kashmir CM Farooq Abdullah sent messages expressing their respect for Devi Lal.

Addressing the impressive gathering hours ahead of his meeting with Congress president Sonia Gandhi along with Lalu, Nitish said: "It is not about a third front, it is going to be a Mahagathbandhan, the main gathbandhan (front)." Expressing confidence that such a coalition would emerge victorious, he said: "If all these parties get together, they (the BJP) won't be able to win the 2024 Lok Sabha polls."

Stating that "in Bihar, seven parties are united; only one party (BJP) is separate", Nitish said: "We all have to join hands across the country, fight together. I would like to seek the blessings of Om Prakash Chautala, and urge that he get more and more Opposition parties together... Then only will this country be rid of those who are determined to ruin it."

Nitish expressed happiness at Badal's presence at the rally, and said: "We have spoken at length with Sharad Pawarji, I told him he should do what he feels is right."

A few days ago, Pawar suggested that TMC chief Mamata Banerjee was ready to bury the hatchet with Congress, a major hurdle in larger Opposition unity.

Accusing BJP of a communal agenda and the media of helping it, the Bihar CM said: "They want to create a Hindu-Muslim divide, when actually there is no such

fight. When the country got divided into two parts, did all the Muslims go there (to Pakistan)? No. More than those who went there, were those who stayed back here."

Nitish also claimed that he wanted to give up chief ministership after parting with the BJP, but that he had been urged to stay on.

Tejashwi, Nitish's Deputy CM, who drew the maximum cheers at the rally, said: "I have come with Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and I thank him for the hammer he struck (at the BJP). The BJP is not going to be able to survive that." Tejashwi complimented the people of Punjab for rejecting "Sanghis". "They only talk about Hindu-Muslim, India-Pakistan, they don't talk about giving MSP to farmers."

He said the NDA was over. "Badalji was in the NDA, Nitishji was in the NDA. All of them are sitting here now."

Pawar appealed to parties to get together in 2024 "and change this regime". He raised the long farmer agitation against the three Central laws, which the government finally withdrew. "Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and western UP farmers sat on protest and knocked at Delhi's doors for an year, but they were not heard. None of the assurances that were made to end the agitation have been fulfilled."

Pawar expressed his sorrow at frequent news of farmer suicides. "That is not a solution, we need to remove the people who create such circumstances that force us to commit suicide."

Yeichury said that "if we want to save our nation, we have to remove the BJP from power". "We need to tell our PM that the people of the nation are owners of public sector companies and he is just their manager. If a manager tries to sell assets owned by the people, they replace the manager."

In his address, Om Prakash Chautala focused on the INLD's promises if it came to power. "We shall give Rs 10,000 monthly old age pension, Rs 1,000 per month to women, and get SYL water to Haryana within a year," he said, adding that they would also ensure "all crops are purchased at MSP, and in mandis".

● Uttarakhand murder

"There are findings of ante-mortem (before death) injuries on the body, suggestive of blunt force trauma. The cause of death in this case is asphyxia consequent upon ante-mortem drowning. Details of the injuries and other findings will be given in the detailed post-mortem report," said the report.

With the final post-mortem report not out yet, Ankit's family initially refused to perform her last rites on Sunday, but they later conceded. The cremation was held late evening.

Earlier in the day, massive protests erupted outside the mortuary in Srinagar, in Pauri Garhwal district, where the body was sent after the post-mortem. Demanding justice for Ankit and her family, protesters blocked the Badrinath-Rishikesh highway outside the mortuary for over seven hours.

The police tried to get Ankit's father, Virendra Bhandari, to talk to protesters to lift the blockade, but it did not work.

Protests were also held at AlIMS-Rishikesh, where the post-mortem examination was done. Some protesters targeted the vehicle of local BJP MLA Renu Bisht.

On Friday, the police had arrested Pulkrit Arya, resort owner and son of former state minister Vinod Arya, and said he had allegedly confessed to pushing Ankit into the canal after an altercation. The resort manager Saurabh Bhaskar and another per-

son identified as Ankit were also arrested. All three have been booked for kidnapping, murder, and causing disappearance of evidence.

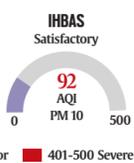
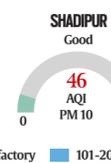
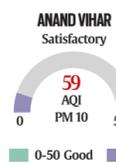
Vinod Arya was removed from the BJP on Saturday.

Uttarakhand DGP Ashok Kumar had said the police had found evidence suggesting that the accused were allegedly putting pressure on Ankit to provide "special services" to some of the guests at the resort – and that she was killed when she resisted.

Meanwhile, Ankit's family also questioned the demolition of a part of the resort – Vanartha Resort – by the Pauri Garhwal district administration. "Why has the administration demolished it? There must have been evidence there... I am not satisfied with the post-mortem report so far," said her father, who demanded that the case be sent to a fast-track court.

Denying the allegations, DGP Ashok Kumar and DIG P Renuka Devi said the property was sealed after detailed videography on Thursday itself. "We have secured all the evidence," said the senior police officer.

Pauri Garhwal District Magistrate (DM) Vijay Kumar Jigdanda had earlier told The Indian Express that a section of the resort was demolished by the administration because of encroachment and illegal activities.



In JNU hostels, you need an umbrella even indoors

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

RAIN DRIPPING through the ceilings, chunks of plaster and cement falling off – rain in Delhi has exposed the crumbling hostel infrastructure at India's premier Jawaharlal Nehru University.

At Sabarmati Hostel, one of the oldest ones on campus, so much rainwater has been dripping through the ceiling at the entrance to the women's wing that residents have had to use umbrellas while walking through it, one resident said.

"The condition is bad in almost all hostels, especially old ones. Many rooms have water leaking through the ceiling. It's even seeping in through the fan, so they are not able to switch those on. In my hostel, the situation is better in first-floor rooms, but the second- and third-floor rooms are in a bad condition. This is an issue we have been facing for 4-5 years, but remains unaddressed. You don't expect to live this way in what's supposed to be the country's best university," said Anagha Pradeep, a JNU Students' Union councillor and resident of Ganga hostel. On Saturday, a chunk of plaster from the ceiling fell to the floor in a room in that hostel.

Across hostels, students have placed buckets in their rooms to gather dripping water. Visuals from another hostel room show rainwater gushing through the light attachment on the wall.

"One wall in my room is completely damp with seepage. It has a bookshelf but I've had to remove my books and everything else from that side of the room. Half my stuff is outside. Some students have been staying in their friends' rooms," said a resi-



Scenes from inside Sabarmati Hostel

the bathrooms. All men's hostels are dealing with leakages," said Umesh Chandra, a resident of Sutlej Hostel and ABVP JNU secretary. "This year, we submitted multiple memoranda demanding hostel renovation and held multiple protests but work is still pending."

A student was injured in April when a section of a bathroom ceiling at Sabarmati hostel fell on him. Since then, the University administration has announced that it has received a grant of Rs 56.34 crore from the UGC and Ministry of Education towards hostel repairs and maintenance.

dent of Sabarmati hostel. A chunk of plaster has also fallen off the ceiling in her balcony.

According to a JNU spokesperson, the university administration has called for a meeting with all departments on Monday to address the issue.

Men's hostels are facing the same issue. "Last night, a chunk of plaster from the ceiling fell on my chair; water is dripping into

PHASE II OF UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION FROM TODAY

Fill in maximum programme-college preferences: DU's advice for students

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

WITH PHASE II of Delhi University's undergraduate admission process starting Monday, the varsity's primary word of advice to candidates has been to fill in a "maximum" number of programme-college preferences while registering.

Because of the nature of the registration process this year, this guiding principle is crucial for candidates to ensure the best possible chance of securing a seat at the University, even if it might not be their most coveted choice.

Over the next two weeks, candidates will be expected to select the programmes, and in order of preference, list out the programme plus college preferences for which they would like to be considered.

For instance, they might choose BA (Honours) History at St Stephen's College as their first



Over next two weeks, candidates will select programmes and in order of preference, list out the programme plus college preferences for which they would like to be considered. *Archive*

preference, BA (Honours) Political Science at Hindu College as their second preference, BA (Honours) Political Science at Miranda House as their third preference, and so on.

After the University releases its CUET score-based merit lists

for the various programme groups, candidates will be allotted seats to their highest possible preference programme-college combination according to their place on the merit list. So, if all seats in the first four programme-college preferences

EXPLAINED E Cut-off vs CUET

UNDER THE cut-off system, candidates had to list the programmes that they wish to apply. Once the colleges released their cut-offs, candidates could seek admission in the college of their choice in which they clear the cut-off and could shift to other colleges after further cut-off lists if they cleared the lowered cut-off in a preferred college. The new system places greater responsibility on candidates to list informed preferences that will determine admissions.

listed by a candidate are filled by candidates higher on the merit list than them, they will be allotted a seat in their fifth preference. The reason candidates should

list the highest possible number of programme-college preferences is because if they do not list a particular combination as a preference, they will not be considered for allocations or upgrades to it.

"The order of preferences listed by a candidate will be the deciding factor for where they will be admitted. Our advice is for candidates to apply for all combinations, in all colleges. We have no history of data since this is the first time, so there is no indication of where a candidate may end up. If a candidate leaves out a particular programme in a particular college, we cannot allocate or upgrade them to it even if there's a vacancy and they are suitably placed on the merit list. This would mean a huge number of combinations but our systems are in place to take 5,000 programme-college combinations," said Dean Admissions Haneet Gandhi. Gandhi also advised that candidates start making a list of their preferences.

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MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES DAY: 26 SEP 2022

- Military Engineer Services (MES), one of the premier Government agencies is celebrating its incredible momentous journey of 100th MES Day on 26 Sep 2022. On this day in 1923, the MES was created and brought under the unified control of Engineer-in-Chief by the then Hon'ble Secretary of State of India by amalgamating Royal Corps of Engineers Personnel and Civilian Staff.
- Over a period of time, MES has been able to deliver quality engineering support to Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, DRDO, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and various other organisations of the MoD with a total annual workload to the tune of approximately ₹ 30000 crore. MES also contributes significantly towards nation building, disaster mitigation and infrastructure development in friendly foreign countries.
- Under the able stewardship of the Engineer in Chief, Lt Gen Harpal Singh, MES is already in the process of completely automating its procedures, complaint management system etc. to ensure increase in speed of delivery, decrease errors, boost quality, minimise cost, simplify business processes and enhance transparency and accountability. Towards this effect, several new e-Governance apps have been launched recently to act as a catalyst in speedier, high quality and economical infrastructure development for armed forces.
- As a part of the Government policies and vision to include the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Sugamya Bharat, Digital India, Green Buildings, Sustainable Development, encouraging use of Renewable Energy, reduction of Carbon Footprint, promotion of Yoga & Fit India etc, recently, the much needed revision of Scales of Accommodation 2009 for Defence Services was incorporated. The revised SoA 2022 will ensure contemporary specifications in future infrastructure assets and better standards of living in addition to optimization of defence land usage and ensuring functionally improved working and living conditions for the Defence personnel
- In sync with the Government directives, MES is at the forefront in the field of energy conservation and reduction of carbon footprint. MES has been entrusted for provisioning of 150 MW (Mega Watt) solar power plants across many locations of Army, Navy and Airforce. Proactive implementation of LEDisation and GRIHA green building norms is confirming the resolve of MES towards energy conservation and eco system preservation. In addition the Road Map for implementation for electricity reduction by using Deemed Licensee Status to purchase electricity as well as to resort to power trading at Indian Energy Exchange is being perused vigorously by the MES.
- Aligning with the current requirements of efficient and speedier construction, Contemporary contract management practice of EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) methodology and modern construction technologies/ techniques have been adopted. MES has completed the first ever 3D printed houses where two Dwelling Units were constructed at South Western Air Command at Gandhi Nagar in record time with considerable savings in the cost. MES is striving hard in creation of defence infrastructure at remote locations and also ensuring sustainable development of the area while conserving the ecology and the environment.
- MES has been always forthcoming towards providing aid to the civil administration during the testing times. Instances where the civil Auth have resorted to electrical strikes at places like Chandigarh and Jammu or any other crisis situation, MES has always risen beyond the call of duty and worked day and night in providing uninterrupted engineering services.
- On the administrative front, new initiatives like SPARSH for online disbursement of pensions for veterans and policies involving posting of personnel's and recruitments have been upgraded & implemented recently which will make the system more transparent keeping in view the organizational requirement and individuals aspirations. In order to ensure timely mobility of staff/personnel and logistic movement of stores, the deficiency in Vehicle state of the MES establishment have been made up by procuring maximum number of vehicles this year. This will enhance the accessibility of the MES staff to render its services within short notice with maximum efficiency. MES has also inaugurated its new insignia which was released on 31 Dec 2021 and marked the significant contribution rendered by the organization in delivery of quality infrastructure for all the three services and other organisations.
- On the occasion of 100th MES Day, Lt Gen Harpal Singh, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, Engineer-in-Chief exhorted all MES personnel to re-dedicate themselves to the service of the Armed Forces and contribute significantly towards the Nation Building.



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For more details, please refer to the Notification No. 13/2020-Central Tax dated 21.03.2020 as amended from time to time, last being Notification No. 17/2022- Central Tax dated 01.08.2022

*Please scan for details of exempted categories of taxpayers

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'RERA has empowered buyers and reined in builders'

How has UP RERA (Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority) brought about a transformation in the housing sector?

Before we talk about Uttar Pradesh, let us first look at the real estate sector before and after RERA. There were unsatisfied buyers, particularly in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Maharashtra, who organised massive agitations, demanding regulation of builders and protection of consumer rights, some of whom had invested their lifetime's earnings in buying life's necessity - a dream home. That's why the present Government brought in the RERA Act.

I think the three reasons why RERA is working because it provides a transparent framework and it protects the buyer's money. First, no builder can, without an agreement, as approved by the government, take more than 10 per cent of the cost of the unit. The contract is well defined and fool-proof. Second, 70 per cent of whatever the builder receives has to be kept in a separate escrow account, which will be used only in construction of houses. And third, it has defined responsibilities and obligations of promoters, buyers and agents. Now the post-RERA scenario should be seen in two parts. Part one is about ongoing projects, which could mean the projects started say in 2010 and had continued till 2017 but were not completed. Part two is about projects, which were started after the law was promulgated. This meant that before the registration, the land had to be identified and its owner declared. So, a lot of land-related issues and obfuscations which burdened previous projects were substantially straightened out before the registration. A builder now has to have a map approved by the Planning Authority because, without land and a map, no registration is possible. For newer projects, things are especially streamlined.

The homebuyer is empowered today. The Supreme Court had passed an order, clearly saying that a buyer has an option of either going to the consumer forum or the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) through the IBC or RERA. The amendment that has made homebuyers part of

the Committee of Creditors (CoC) in the NCLT process has also substantially strengthened them. As a result, promoters, who are serious about implementing projects, think there is a lot of meat in the game. That differentiation has been progressively stark. Moreover, now only the competent promoters can be in the field and carry the business forward. This will help everybody in the long-term because if somebody is progressive and able to deliver on time, he/she will look at technologies, which will bring down the cost. He will look at technologies for marketing, promotion, implementation, monitoring and grievance redressal.

I hear from a lot of buyers as well as promoters that after RERA has come in, there has been a major behavioural modification on both sides. The buyers understand what is the level at which the Act helps them. The promoters also realise that it is not a total free-for-all.

With greater awareness and redressal mechanisms, would you say you are getting fewer complaints now?

Compared to the first two years, the number of overall complaints has reduced and fewer complaints are being registered now. But having said that, the tag of Uttar Pradesh being number one in terms of complaints and disposal has also not gone away. As a result of all the work which my team has done in the last four years, the realisation that non-compliance of norms would lead to certain consequence is slowly becoming clearer to everyone. That, I think, is a bigger achievement for RERA than mere statistics of how many cases were filed and resolved. Numbers are important because they are a measure of our performance but mindset and perception shifts are what matter. For the record, U.P. RERA has handled 38% of the whole country's RERA complaints and contributed 40% to disposal, around 70% of these have already been implemented. My personal view is that almost 65 per cent of the ongoing projects have progressed to completion and out of several of them which were delayed, many are progressing. About 20-25 per cent of



*More than all the work of five years, the realisation that non-compliance of norms could lead to a certain consequence is starkly clearer to everyone. That shift in perception scores over statistics of how many cases were filed and resolved, says UP RERA chairman **Rajive Kumar***

them are still retrievable. Another 10 to 15 per cent are actually the most difficult; some of them are already in the NCLT. And we are also seeing a phenomenon where the promoters are also going to NCLT, stating that their projects are no longer viable.

How and why did the builders spread themselves so thin that they have had to declare bankruptcy?

The cycle of real estate turned in 2013-14 when the money flowing into the sector got

stalled. These were the years when a large number of projects were launched in the NCR area, because land was made available at an initial amount of 10 per cent of the total payment. There was a reigning ideology among builders that if they had a large land bank, they would be in a good competitive position. Here, I am not focussing on those who were either inexperienced or did not have good intentions to begin with. So, they would buy one piece of land, raise some money on that and use it to buy more land. As a re-

sult, they got very thinly spread. And then when the cycle turned, they didn't know where to hide.

However, there was an oversupply in this area, which, to a certain extent, is still there. Progressively, the off take of flats, especially of the completed ones, has picked up in the last seven to eight months, post-Covid. At present, of all registered projects in UP, about 60 per cent are completed. The sentiments are improving. People are looking at buying properties again. This area is seeing major developments, especially the Jewar airport, a large number of data centres and a huge logistics park are coming up. This is the area where both the dedicated freight corridors will be passing through. UP has the longest expressway grid in the country and is still adding to it.

There are a lot of abandoned projects around the Budd International Circuit. Do you think these can be revived?

Many such "stuck" promoters are looking for a management contract, other investors and alternative ways of completing their projects. Mind you, there is a lot of interest as this area still provides the most cost-effective housing in the NCR. Delhi is highly-priced and even the ticket size is pretty big for the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) flats. Gurgaon has a lot of high-end projects. While Noida, too, has high-end projects, its affordable housing for the middle class stands out. As the projects get completed, sale won't be an issue. The only issue is that because there is an overhang in terms of inventory, it will take a little while for this inventory to liquidate. So those builders, who have more than one project, can complete one and recycle the money to finish the second and third. They are comparatively better off than those who have only a single project that is stuck. It is these 10-15% projects that are more in the news. But I'm very positive about the sector's future.

Given the opportunities created by the connectivity corridor, what are the prospects of emerging hubs elsewhere in UP?

A lot of new registrations are coming up in

non-NCR areas. Almost 20 per cent are in Lucknow, there is a fair proportion in Varanasi and a lot of new projects are coming up in Gorakhpur, Jhansi, Bareilly, Moradabad, Agra, Mathura and Vrindavan. When we started, the split of projects between NCR and non-NCR areas was about 50-50. Now, under the new project category, I think it is 65-35. More projects have come up in the non-NCR region.

You've handled so many cases over the last four years and continue to do so. Were there any that were challenging?

One of the biggest positives was that we were interacting with associations, both on the buyer and the builder side, right from the beginning. Second, we had a very supportive state government. UP RERA is headquartered in Lucknow but when it realised that almost 75 per cent of our complaints are from the Noida region, it notified a regional office. Third, we set up conciliation forums. The enablers were there but setting up a new organisation itself was a challenge with rules having to be laid down. We took oath on August 9, 2018. In a matter of three weeks, from September 3, 2018, we started holding our hearings, both in Lucknow and Greater NOIDA.

How has digitisation helped streamline matters?

Uttar Pradesh was the first state in the country to have online registration of complaints. In early February 2020, we started e-courts even before the lockdown. During Covid, we started RERA Samvaad, whereby a person could log in on our website and write a post about an issue that bothered him and the officer he would want to meet. We gave users a video slot, linking it with the officer concerned. It's interactive. It's also reassuring. We have had around 90 RERA Samvaads and close to 2,500 problems were resolved.

A lot of our time and energy in the last year-and-a-half was spent following up on orders already issued. The long-term effects are not only confined to the numbers which have come to us but in the number of people who have benefited from completion of projects and issuance of

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Occupancy Certificates (OC). We pressurise the promoter for early completion. Maybe 10 of those cases come to us. But there are 900 other buyers who are in that project. So, if the project completion is expedited, everybody benefits.

How has RERA helped in covering up that trust deficit that exists between the buyer and promoter? Have the predators been flushed out?

RERA provides a very accessible and transparent platform which allows promoters and buyers to engage for solutions rather than confrontations. A lot of people come to me and say that they leverage RERA's name to elicit the promoter's response for an early resolution. Promoters now know that if they don't comply, then they will be slapped with interest for the delay and other penalties. As for predators, I would say the differentiation between good promoters and others is happening. But to say that all unscrupulous ones have melted away is a little early.

A lot of projects are still in a limbo. What is RERA's position on such projects?

We have recently sorted out Kalypso Court by Jaypee. We have a dozen such projects where the associations of allottees have come forward. UP RERA has provided a facilitative framework to bridge the trust deficit and it's almost like underwriting a contract. For projects, which are 90 per cent complete, it's a win-win for everybody; the buyers get their houses and the builder's responsibilities are over. And we get one less project which will add to issues with RERA and other forums. For projects which are stalled or heavily delayed but completed around 50 per cent, getting a new promoter who has finances, either through a management contract or by utilising the facility of Section 15 of the RERA Act, by which a new promoter can be inducted, is a good option. We just approved two such projects under Section 15. To change a promoter, you require the two-thirds concurrence of the buyers. To permit it, we issue a public notice for sending in objections to the proposal. For projects where a lot of work is to be done, I think burdening the association with such a huge task is a little difficult. It is ideal if we can locate a new builder with comparatively deeper pockets.

Sometimes builders begin the process of possession without environmental clearances. How does RERA close these gaps?

The mandatory clearances are supposed to be filed at the time of registration. The older ongoing projects are problematic but for all new registrations, there is a fairly intensive examination of these aspects. The banking and financial sector has also started asking for the RERA registration number before processing a loan. But a survey revealed that 40 per cent of buyers were still willing to take a non-RERA registered project if it was cheap. The problem and part of the answer to your question lie here. If somebody is willing to take a risk, who can de-risk that person? We will further be strengthening our awareness campaign on radio and social media.



THE REAL Estate Regulatory Authority Act (RERA) of 2016 came to effect in 2017. Since its beginning, the committees have been working throughout India to enhance standardisation, professionalism, transparency, regulation and solve disputes in the real estate industry. It has been actively involved in the processing and successfully tackling numerous pending legal and regulatory cases. I believe RERA succeeds so wonderfully that it is noteworthy that they have made a lot of progress in a short amount of time. I would like to suggest that the RERA should have a single regulatory body in charge of overseeing all real estate-related issues nationwide. Only the Supreme Court and the High Courts should take precedence over RERA regulating bodies.

SUNIL JINDAL
CEO, SVP Group



THE LAST four years of RERA have been a significant sentiment booster for all the stakeholders, including the end-users, investors and developers. While RERA has played an important role in eliminating the fly-by-night operators, it has also helped in building a more transparent relationship between the builders and the buyers. By establishing an environment of trust and financial discipline, RERA has, over the years, successfully restored the confidence of the buyers. Consequently, the sales in the real estate sector have increased significantly in all these years.

ASHISH BHUTANI
CEO, Bhutani Group



THE REAL estate industry in UP had many apprehensions about the introduction of RERA in the state. It was felt that another layer of regulation was restrictive and avoidable. We were even apprehensive about harassment from this new body. However, our experience over the last five years has been quite different. We found UP RERA actually playing a positive role in the development of the sector. Though builders get adverse orders from the body, which is expected in a stalled or delayed project, the primary focus of UP RERA has been the delivery of houses to homebuyers. To this end, they are willing to interface with the government and even the development authorities to debottleneck the process.

One successful initiative of UP RERA has been the pre-litigation process wherein the builder and the allottees' disputes are attempted to be resolved through mediation. We have found that 90 per cent of cases get resolved at this stage itself.

The role of the inaugural leadership team is key in establishing any institution. The leadership provided by Rajive Kumar, Balvinder Kumar and Abrar Ahmed has been instrumental in the positive role that UP RERA is now playing in the sector.

PANKAJ BAJAJ
MD, Eldeco Group



I CONGRATULATE UP-RERA on completing four years in the service of the real estate sector. The RERA Act has contributed in a big way to inspiring confidence among the buyers at a time when the sector was going through a rough patch. It has enabled transparency in dealings in the real estate sector. An approval by RERA is akin to a seal of trust for homebuyers. For the developer too, getting a project sanctioned by RERA ensures that the project has been vetted on every count. It boosts customers' confidence in the project. Ever since its inception, UP-RERA has been proactive and protected buyer investment.

MANOJ GAUR
Chairman and Managing Director, Gaur's Group
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RERA has boosted the confidence level of home buyers. This will automatically push up demand for housing and revive the real estate sector. RERA has inspired builders to put forward their issues and sort them out. Now buyers too need to pay their instalments on time. So it is a win-win for both the builder and buyer as there is a fast mechanism for redressing grievances.

PRASHANT TIWARI
Chairman, Prateek Group



SINCE ITS inception in 2016, RERA and its implementation has been one of the biggest success stories in the Indian real estate industry. In a short span of time, RERA has been instrumental in taking the industry out of troubled waters. Its legal framework aimed at empowering homebuyers has been further fortified through various important judgements passed on by India's topmost court. A much-needed reform like RERA, for information dissemination, stakeholders' accountability, grievance resolution and rightful usage of buyer's monies, has resulted in the revival of the real estate sector in the last few years.

S.K. NARVAR
Group Chairman, Trident Realty



IT IS indeed a moment of great jubilation for all of us. Being in the real estate industry, I understand how important it is to have RERA status in order to deliver transparent and committed services to customers. The four years of RERA in UP obviously imply that people are now able to have happier experiences while investing. I am also aware of how safety and adherence to rules are being prioritised like never before. I am quite convinced that the safety and security embodied by RERA is going to draw more builders and buyers towards UP, particularly Noida.

SUNIL SISODIYA
Founder & Director,
Geetanjali Homestate Pvt. Ltd.



IT IS an important day as UP RERA completes its four-year run of setting up a well-regulated framework and resolving complaints in the shortest possible time. The authorities have not only brought rules and regulations to the table but have also restored the buyer's trust in real estate. This has led to a major decline of most malpractices by some unscrupulous elements in the real estate sector. It has brought massive relief to buyers who are now getting their money's worth.

Our T3 Assurance Policy of Timely Delivery, Transparency and Technology has always been directly proportional to the values and vision of UP RERA. We at SKA Group have constantly aimed to effectively uphold the vision of RERA by protecting the interests of home buyers and providing them with total transparency in terms of property development.

SANJAY SHARMA
Director, SKA Group



RERA in UP started with a lot of apprehension among stakeholders. There were misconceptions that it would slow down projects or lead to harassment. However, all the fears were unfounded and the way it has helped in the revival of the real estate sector over the last five years has been commendable. The trust between the stakeholders – authorities, developers, and buyers – has reached new highs. We hope that UP RERA will further cement the importance of the real estate sector in powering our overall economic growth. At present, the need is to concentrate on strengthening this sector. This is extremely important as many industries are linked with the sector, and any glitch might act as a decelerator. We are confident that the people in charge of implementing RERA in letter and spirit will continue to guide the sector in the right direction.

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<p>► Assistant Professor's</p> <p>General Surgery, Community Medicine, FMT, Pathology, Surgical Gastroenterology, Urology, Surgical Oncology, Medical Oncology, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation</p>	<p>► Sr. Resident's</p> <p>Emergency Medicine, Urology, Surgical Gastroenterology, Medical Oncology, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation</p>

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बिहार सरकार
समाहरणालय, गया।

आम सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि बिहार बालू खनन नीति, 2019 तथा बिहार खनिज (समानुदान, अवैध खनन, परिवहन एवं भंडारण निवारण) नियमावली, 2019 में उल्लिखित प्रावधानों के तहत गया जिला के बालूघाटों की अगामी पाँच वर्षों के लिए बंदोबस्ती ई निविदा-सह-ई नीलामी के माध्यम से कराये जाने हेतु समाचार पत्रों में निर्गत विज्ञापन संख्या PR.- 8254 (Mines) 2022-23 में निर्धारित ई-नीलामी कार्यक्रम को कतिपय कारणवश तत्काल स्थगित किया जाता है। बालूघाटों की ई निविदा-सह-ई नीलामी संबंधित नया कार्यक्रम पुनः प्रकाशित किया जायेगा, जिसे गया जिला के वेबसाईट गया.nic.in पर देखा जा सकता है।

**समाहर्ता,
गया।**

PR- 8598 (District) 2022-23 नशे से बनानी दूरी है, क्योंकि परिवार जरूरी है।

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ
TENDER NOTICE

L. No. JHS-Dy-CEE-WS-T-08-2022-23 Date: 23.09.2022

For & on behalf of President of India, the Dy. CEE/Work Shop, North Central Railway, Jhansi invites open tenders through online (E-Tendering) for the following work:-

Description of work	Tender value	Bid Security
JHS Workshop: Augmentation of hostel capacity in STC Jhansi.	₹25,85,300/- only	₹51,800/- only

Tender No.: JHS-Dy-CEE-WS-T-08-2022-23, Completion period: 04 months. Closing date of tender: 28.10.2022 (upto 15.00 Hrs.). Tenderer will submit the tender online upto 28.10.2022 (upto 15.00 Hrs.) Complete details & for submission of tenders can be seen in Indian Railway website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> 1312/22 FA

#northcentralrailways @CPRONCR @northcentralrailway www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

Punjab Logistics Infrastructure Limited
(A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA UNDERTAKING)
CORPORATE OFFICE - VPO Shuangrana, Malerkotla Road, Near Toll Plaza, Ludhiana-141204

TENDER NOTICE (E-Tendering Mode Only)

Online "Handling of Containers/Cargo, Internal Transportation of Containers, PFT Rakes (Break Bulk Cargo) on Hiring Basis, Ahmedgarh/Ludhiana, Punjab" only through e-tender cum reverse auction mode (in two bid system).

Tender No.	PLIL/H&T/Hiring/22
Name of Work	Handling of Containers/Cargo, Internal Transportation of Containers, PFT Rakes (Break Bulk Cargo) on Hiring Basis, Ahmedgarh/Ludhiana, Punjab.
Estimated Cost	Rs. 7,72,46,400/- (Excluding GST) for 4 years.
Period of the Contract	4 years.
Earnest Money Deposit*	Rs. 3,87,000/- through e-Payment.
Cost of Document*	Rs. 1,000/- inclusive of all taxes and duties through e-payment.
Tender Processing Fee*	Rs. 4720/- inclusive of all taxes and duties (Non-refundable) through e-payment.
Date of Sale (Online)	From 26.09.2022 at 15:00 hrs. upto 19.10.2022, 16:00 hrs.
Last Date & Time of Submission	On 20.10.2022 upto 15:00 hrs.
Date & Time of Opening	On 21.10.2022 at 15:30 hrs.

* Through e-Payment

The bid document can also be downloaded from the website (www.tenderwizard.com/CCL), Tender notice is also available on the website www.concorinda.com, www.plil.co.in, www.pswc.in, PLIL reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Chief Executive Officer/PLIL

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ
E-Procurement Tender Notice No. 22/66 Dt. 23.09.2022

On behalf of the President of India, The Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj, (An ISO 9001:2015 certified unit) invites the following E-Procurement Tenders:-

S. N.	Tender No.	Short Description	Qty.	Tender opening date
1.	70223428	PAINT READY MIXED, RED OXIDE	35000 LTR	20.10.2022
2.	70221592	ROLLER TAPER SIGMENT W 5.4	11 SET	27.10.2022
3.	70221589	Rolling Flat Segment dia 25-34 mm	7 SET	01.11.2022
4.	20223721B	Capacitor Harmonic Filter	60 Nos.	14.10.2022

Note: The complete information of above tenders can be seen and downloaded from IREPS website i.e. <https://www.ireps.gov.in>. 1313/22 (ADM)

#Northcentralrailways www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR @northcentralrailway

INTER-UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR ASTRONOMY AND ASTROPHYSICS
(An Autonomous Institution of the University Grants Commission)
Post Bag - 4, Savitribai Phule Pune University Campus, Ganesh Khind, Pune - 7. Phone : 25604100 / 25691414 Fax : 25604699

Tender for Construction of Proposed Academic and Research Building - IUCAA 2

The Estate Manager, on behalf of the Director, IUCAA, Pune, invites bids from reputed bidders for "Construction of Proposed Academic and Research Building - IUCAA 2, at S. No. 25/1/1/1/1/2, Aundh, IUCAA Campus, Pune." The tender shall be available on CPP Portal & IUCAA Web Site from 26/09/2022.

Interested parties may view and download the tender document from the Government Central Procurement Portal <http://e-procure.gov.in/e-procure/app>. It is also available on IUCAA's website at <https://www.iucaa.in/tenders>. Bids will be accepted on the CPP Portal only.

Estate Manager, IUCAA

CHENNAI METRO RAIL LIMITED
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of Tamil Nadu)
Admin Building, CMRL Depot, Poonamallee High Road, Koyambedu, Chennai - 600 107. Phone: 044 2379 2000

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Contract Name	Tender for Licensing of Kiosk Spaces at Selected Elevated and UG Metro Stations along Corridor-1 & 2 of Phase-I & Extension
Contract No	CMRL/BD/Kiosk-10/2022/489/03
Documents downloaded from eprocurement portal	26.09.2022 to 10.10.2022
Pre Bid Meeting Date	30.09.2022 on 11:30 hrs at CMRL Office-Admin Building, Koyambedu, Chennai-107
Due Date of Bid Submission	10/10/2022 up to 17.00 hours (IST)
Date of Bid Opening	11/10/2022 at 17.05 hours (IST)

For complete details, please visit e-procurement website <http://e-procure.gov.in/e-procure/app>
Any Corrigendum/Addendum to this publication, if any, would appear only on above-mentioned website and will not be published in newspapers.

Tender Authority :- The Chief General Manager (P&BD), Chennai Metro Rail Limited, Admin Building, CMRL Depot, Poonamallee High Road, Koyambedu, Chennai - 600 107. Phone 044 - 2379 2000. www.chennaiMetroRail.org. E-mail: krishnan.rm@cmrl.in

DIPR/4244/TENDER/2022 **Chief General Manager (P&BD)**
Chennai Metro Rail Limited

Chief Engineer, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency
First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatraj, Opp-IT Park, Sahasradhara Road, Dehradun

Ref. No. 1600 / 11-02(xix)-2/ITCO/URRDA/22 Dated : 24-09-2022

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY) e-Procurement Notice- 12/2022-23

The Chief Engineer, URRDA on behalf of Governor of Uttarakhand invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of Bridges under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the Districts of **Nainital & Pithoragarh** for 02 number of Packages with estimated cost totaling to **Rs. 4.58 Crore** including their maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent*.

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: **26-09-2022.**

Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgstendersuk.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities.

The bidders are required to submit original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB with **CONCERNED CIRCLE OFFICES, mentioned in SBD/MBD, only up to or before the time and date of the submission of the Bids (for World Bank funded works) and on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the bid (for Regular PMGSY Works)**, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive. No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time of submission of bids.

Last Date / Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: **03-10-2022 01:00 PM.**

For further details please log on to www.pmgstendersuk.gov.in.

Chief Engineer, URRDA, Dehradun

* Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

Note : For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2608125 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.



The nation remembers pioneer of socialism & sculptor of a unique society who blessed humanity with the mantra of 'एक रुपया, एक ईंट'

Maharaja Agrasen Ji
on his Birth Anniversary

Monday, September 26, 2022



"Maharaja Agrasen Ji was the epitome of social harmony and a true Karmayogi. Maharaja Agrasen's work towards human welfare, philanthropy and upliftment of the underprivileged will always inspire us."
- Narendra Modi

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana www.prharyana.gov.in

VACCINATIONS IN
LAST 24 HOURS
17,178PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: 43
OXYGEN SUPPORT 9
VENTILATOR SUPPORT 4DELHI TOTAL
CASES
20,03,013

	Total	Vacant
HOSPITAL BEDS	8,874	8,831
ICU BEDS	2,086	2,069

Total active cases in Delhi

	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Sep 24	71	98	0	8,737
Sep 25	75	73	0	6,822
Total	405*	19,76,107	26,501	4,02,02,404

NOIDA

	Sep 24	Sep 25
Cases	N/A	N/A
Deaths	N/A	N/A

GURGAON

	Sep 24	Sep 25
Cases	32	26
Deaths	0	0

BRIEFLY

Two Union ministry staff among 5 held for cheating

New Delhi: Five persons, including two Union Health ministry staffers, have been arrested by Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing for allegedly cheating people on the pretext of giving employment opportunities related to transportation of Covid vaccines to different states. Police said the accused cheated at least six persons of Rs 15 crore. The matter came to light after several complaints were received where the victims alleged that they had been duped of crores. "All the complainants claimed that they were made to sit inside the conference room of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to execute the work order for transportation of Covid vaccines. They later found they were cheated," said an officer.

Fake passport racket busted, 9 arrested

New Delhi: The Delhi Police Thursday arrested nine people, including eight Bangladeshi nationals, for allegedly forging passports and other documents to gain Indian citizenship. Police said the accused arrived at the Indira Gandhi International airport from Seychelles, South Africa, Nepal and other neighbouring countries Wednesday.

Man held after shootout; cop injured

Ghaziabad: Police Saturday night arrested a man following an encounter in the Vijay Nagar area, officers said. The man, identified as Raja Khalid, was wounded in the shootout, along with a policeman. Police said a pistol and live ammunition were recovered from the accused, besides his motorbike, which turned out to have been stolen from the Sihani gate area.

BJP's Manoj Tiwari moves SC against ban on firecrackers

New Delhi: BJP MP Manoj Tiwari has moved the Supreme Court against the ban on firecrackers in Delhi during Diwali. The court will hear the matter on October 10. "Due to the decisions, Hindus were targeted on the eve of Deepawali and were arrested. Indians, in general, were targeted on their festivals," said Tiwari in a press statement. ENS

AHEAD OF MCD POLLS

To mark attendance at Nadda rally, QR code system for BJP workers

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

WITH THE likelihood of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi elections being held in December, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) wants all booth workers to attend party president JP Nadda's address to them on October 16 – and will have a unique attendance system to ensure no one skips the event.

A BJP spokesperson said that an identity card with a QR code-based scanner would be given to each worker, to keep track of whether or not he or she arrived at the programme.

The MCD in Delhi has been run by the BJP for three consecutive terms and faces significant anti-incumbency, even as the

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is close on its heels.

Nadda will be addressing thousands of booth workers of Delhi on October 16 from Ramliya Maidan which, party insiders say, will also be an occasion to infuse energy in the cadre ahead of the corporation polls.

The MCD polls, originally scheduled for April, were put off hours before the election schedule was to be announced in March. The BJP-led central government said it wants to unify the MCDs, which it eventually did, and conduct delimitation to decrease the number of wards from 272 to 250. Now, with the first delimitation draft ready, the BJP has started its poll preparations by sticking to its strength-cadre building.

Delhi BJP president Adesh



BJP president JP Nadda

Gupta said that five booth workers each from over 13,000 booths in Delhi will be present at the occasion.

The councillors and mandal presidents have been told to make a list of five people in each booth – in line with the party's system of 'panch padeshwar'. Under this, each booth is handled by a president, a woman, a youth

worker, a booth palak (nurturer), and a booth-level officer appointed by the party. The 270 mandal presidents of BJP have to submit lists of panch padeshwar from each booth. "The target is to form or update the teams and submit the details in the next few days," he said.

Along with BJP, AAP, too, is making poll preparations and has asked its workers to reach out to people, especially in slums and jhuggi clusters, to educate the people about electricity subsidy registration scheme so that they don't miss out on applying and continue to get the benefit of free power for up to 200 units of consumption.

"The workers have been told to help people apply both online and offline and ensure that they avail of the power subsidy bene-

fits," said a senior AAP leader.

Currently, the people get a 100% subsidy for consuming less than 200 units and a 50% subsidy up to Rs 800 for consuming up to 400 units. The Delhi government has now made it mandatory for the people to opt in for the subsidy to continue getting the benefits.

"We'll reach out to the masses and explain to them how simple the electricity subsidy registration process is so that the maximum number of citizens can take benefit of it," AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak said.

"The AAP volunteers will go door-to-door to help out citizens in registering for the electricity subsidy," he added. The decision to initiate a door-to-door campaign was taken in a meeting of the AAP office bearers.

Club alleges extortion, police staff being probed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

DELHI POLICE has initiated an enquiry against the SHO and staff posted at Kotla Mubarakpur police station after a club in South Extension 1 alleged police were trying to extort money from them in connection with a brawl there on September 18.

While a woman had alleged that she was sexually harassed and struck during the brawl, which broke out over admission to the club, the management had denied her claims and raised allegations against the police.

On Sunday, Chandan Chowdhary, DCP (South), said, "We had received a call from a woman who alleged her clothes were torn and she was assaulted by the bouncers. We are analysing CCTV footage to zero in on those involved. So far, nobody has been arrested."

On allegations raised by the club management, she said, "The district's police's vigilance cell is conducting an enquiry... We are checking how many PCR calls were received and what action was taken by the station house officer (SHO)."

When contacted on Saturday, the club officials had said: "Three women and four men had come in a drunk condition and misbehaved with our staff... Some officers of the police station are extorting us for large sums over the issue and some of our staff were also beaten by them. We have filed a complaint with senior officials regarding the matter."

Police had on Saturday raised other allegations against the club too. They had said that when personnel had gone based on another complaint of quarrelling at the club, seven people who allegedly tried to stop them were detained.

DCP Chowdhary had also said: "It is pertinent to note that in 2019, a case... was filed with... against the bar owner, his son, and staff... When Excise Staff went to conduct a raid, they were assaulted and confined..."



Preparations for the Luv Kush Ramlila, the capital's most prominent, near the Red Fort. Tashi Tobgyal

5,000 a day expected, preparation begins for Red Fort Ramlila

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

WITH DUSSEHRA festivities starting next week opposite Delhi's Red Fort, police in Delhi have increased security in and around the monument. The Luv Kush Ramlila, the capital's most prominent, is expected to be attended by more than 5,000 people every day, including VIPs. And with Covid numbers dwindling, this year's festivities are expected to be particularly frenetic.

Iron sheets, grids, drones, four entry and exit points, 120 black commandos, and more than 400 policemen will be in place to guard the Red Fort lawns once the celebrations begin. Officials from the Luv Kush Ramlila committee said they expect between 25,000 and 30,000 people in the first five days. The Ramlila will be held from

A senior police officer said that gates will be used by the general public for entry and exit. "We are expecting the Prime Minister and parliamentarians at the venue," the officer said.

September 26 to October 5.

The iron sheets, meant to ensure crowds are navigated in a controlled manner and there is no outward movement, will be mounted on top of boundary walls along with wires and a grid.

"Four gates will be used by the general public for entry and exit. An emergency gate and a gate for VIP entry have also been put up. We are expecting the Prime Minister and parliamentarians at the venue. Actor Prabhakar will also attend the Ramlila to burn the Ravana effigy. The crowd will swell up," said a senior police officer.

"There are already 100-150 CCTVs at the Red Fort area. We have installed an additional 150 to monitor all activity. We will also be using drones to maintain law and order. The drones will be mainly used at night," added the officer.

Four temporary shelters have been built around the lawns for security personnel to monitor CCTV and drone footage. Masks aren't mandatory at the grounds but organisers said they have asked attendees to wear them. More than 500 volunteers will also be on the lawns to oversee security arrangements.

Sagar Singh Kalsi, DCP (North), said security and traffic arrangements have been made after consultations with the Luv Kush Committee members.

City's rural areas to have a bus every 5-10 mins

New Delhi: In a bid to facilitate better last-mile connectivity and transportation services to rural and outer parts of the national capital, the AAP-led Delhi government has planned to procure around 2,300 nine-metre-long mini electric buses, called "rural feeders".

"The transport department, which earlier planned 11,000 buses for Delhi, decided to bring down the number of standard buses and buy about 2,300 mini e-buses to cater to the people with a bus at 5 to 10 minutes frequency," said an official.

"Delhi plans to buy 6,300 electric buses for its public transport fleet. Of these 2,300 will be low-floor buses, which will run on 172 routes in rural areas, villages and outer parts of the city where the frequency of standard buses is currently limited," said the official. At present, the city has 700 nine-metre-long buses that ply 72 routes. ENS

SURVEY'S FINDINGS

What lower rain in Delhi this year has meant for dragonflies, damselflies

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

A SURVEY of dragonflies and damselflies at Delhi's biodiversity parks indicates that low rainfall this year may have impacted their life cycles and numbers.

In a week-long survey that concluded on Sunday, a total of 25 species of dragonflies and damselflies were recorded across seven biodiversity parks.

The Kamla Nehru Ridge recorded the maximum number of species – 25. The Yamuna Biodiversity Park recorded 23 species, a little less than the 25 species recorded in 2018. In terms of the number of individuals

recorded, the Kalindi Biodiversity Park recorded the highest number at 3,348, followed by the Aravalli Biodiversity Park where 555 individuals were counted.

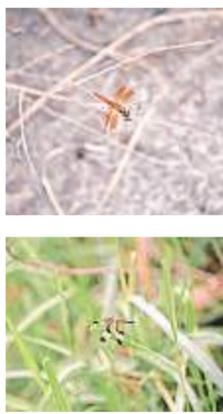
The last such survey was conducted in 2018 at the Yamuna, Tilpath Valley and Neela Haaz Biodiversity Parks. The Neela Haaz biodiversity park also recorded a fewer number of species this year – just six – as compared to 2018, when nine species were counted.

Species that were recorded include the Scarlet Skimmer, Picture Wing dragonfly and the Granite Ghost.

In addition to counting the number of species in the two main ecosystems of Delhi – the

Aravallis and the Yamuna – the survey was also meant to determine whether the deficit in rainfall in Delhi this monsoon has had any impact on dragonflies and damselflies.

Faiyaz Khudsar, scientist in-charge, Biodiversity Parks Programme at the Centre for Environment Management of Degraded Ecosystems, said, "Since the temperature was high and rainfall was low, there was little water in the river and the floodplain wetlands are shrunken. The nymph, which is one of the stages of the life cycle of the dragonfly, stays in the water for a long period of time and is a voracious feeder of mosquito larvae. When the temperature is



(Clockwise from above) Golden Darlet; Pied Paddy Skimmer; Ditch Jewel. As many as 25 species of dragonflies and damselflies were recorded across seven biodiversity parks. DDA Biodiversity Parks

high and there's less rainfall and less water, the nymph grows quickly into an adult. Since dragonflies have small life spans, they die quickly. That's the scenario this time."

"When the temperature is high and the metamorphosis is faster, the wing size also tends to reduce. And, when the wing size reduces, their dispersal can reduce drastically. Since their movement is reduced, their foraging – they feed on adult mosquitoes – is also reduced," Khudsar added.

The city has recorded a deficit in rainfall for the monsoon so far. For the month of September, there was a large deficit in rainfall till this week when monsoonal

rainfall picked up again.

With rainfall having picked up towards the end of the week, the scientists noticed that the dragonflies began laying eggs again. "They have started breeding again thinking that it is the monsoon. Soon, winter will come, and what's going to happen to those eggs?" Khudsar said. Collecting data of this sort for a few years can help track the changes taking place in the ecosystem, and it could be too soon now to arrive at concrete conclusions, he added.

Dragonflies serve as biological control for mosquitoes. They are also an indicator of water quality in wetlands and water bodies since polluted water is detrimental to them.

New Delhi

For Gujarat to see changes like in Punjab and Delhi, its youths will have to stand up: Kejriwal

AAP chief invites Dalit family for dinner at his Delhi residence, promises to send flight tickets

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, SEPTEMBER 25

CALLING ON Gujarat's youths to bring about change by motivating their families to vote for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the upcoming Gujarat assembly elections, Delhi Chief Minister and party convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said that for Gujarat to see changes like in Delhi and Punjab, its youths will have to stand up.

Addressing a rally in Nikol area of Ahmedabad along with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Kejriwal said, "This election is for a revolutionary party, for new politics like ours, it is a party for the youth... those who are a little older will say, 'I have always been with the BJP, I have always been with the Congress', they don't listen... It is your responsibility to ensure votes of your family."

Earlier, Kejriwal and Mann addressed another rally of outsourced, contractual and sanitation workers. At the Shahibaug rally of sanitation workers, the Delhi CM responded to an invitation by Harsh Solanki, a Dalit, to dine at his home, by inviting his whole family to dine with him in Delhi on Monday.

Kejriwal said, "I have seen that every leader visits the house of a Dalit for a meal to show off. Till to-



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann at Naroda on Sunday. Nirmal Harindran

day, no leader has invited a Dalit to his house for a meal. Will you come to my house to have food together," he asked and Solanki promptly accepted.

The Delhi CM added, "Flight tickets will be sent to you. And I promise that I will come and eat at your place the next time I visit Ahmedabad."

Hopeful that upcoming Assembly polls would be nothing less than a "movement or revolution", AAP supremo said, "They abuse me everyday calling me a cheat, a maha thug, a Khalistani, terrorist... what is my fault? I am only saying I will build schools, hospitals and provide jobs."

Referring to "WhatsApp groups of Gujarat", Kejriwal said he had seen a message circulating that said, "If you vote for Congress Sonia Gandhi's son will prosper, if you vote for BJP, Amit Shah's son will prosper, but if you vote for Aam Aadmi Party, then every child of Gujarat will prosper."

Kejriwal has put out a calendar for hiring for government jobs such as talatis, teachers, sub-inspectors and assistant sub-inspectors, along with promising an unemployment allowance of Rs 3,000 each for those who waited till they were employed. "If properties of leaders of both these parties (BJP, Congress) is sold, Gujarat can be rid of all debt."

Referring to the slogans shouted at him in support of PM Narendra Modi at Vadodara airport when he visited on September 20, Kejriwal said, "I am telling those people, I will never tell you to change your slogan but if our government comes to power we will give you jobs and unemployment allowance." By improving schools, raising standard of education and hiring teachers, setting up mohalla clinics, each creating five new jobs, supplying ration at the doorstep like in Punjab, 20 lakh jobs can be created in Gujarat, he said.

Speaking at the event, Mann urged the youth to walk the path of the late revolutionary Bhagat Singh and said, "He was hanged at the age of 23... At the age at which youths ask their fathers for a motorbike, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru asked for their country from the British."

KANCHANVASDEV
CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 25



Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit

AFTER A week-long confrontation over the summoning of a Vidhan Sabha session, Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit Sunday gave his approval to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government to convene the session on September 27.

The approval came hours after government had written a protest letter to the Governor stating that "demand for agenda/details" was "unknown to law, beyond the Constitution, contrary to precedent, practice and convention and hence legally untenable."

The row between Raj Bhavan and the AAP government had begun after the Governor withdrew an order summoning a special sitting of the Vidhan Sabha called by chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to table a confidence motion.

Earlier, Governor Purohit had sought details of the business the

government wanted to take up in the Vidhan Sabha drawing a sharp reaction from Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann who said it was "too much". Before that, Governor Purohit had schooled Mann about the rules of Vidhan Sabha and told him his advisers were not briefing him properly.

The Governor had written a letter to Mann saying, "After reading your statements in today's newspapers, it appears to me that perhaps you are very angry with me. I think your legal advisers are not briefing you adequately. Perhaps your opinion about me will definitely change after reading the provisions of Articles 167 and 168 of the Constitution, which I'm quoting for your ready reference."

The Governor was referring to Mann's statement on Friday that said, "Governor/President consent before any session of Legislature is a formality. In 75 years, no President/Governor ever asked for the list of Legislative business before calling a session. Legislative business is decided by BAC and Speaker."

Mann's statement came after Governor asked the government for details of legislative business it was planning to undertake in the Vidhan Sabha session.

The letter further added, "It is, therefore, requested that the orders of the Hon'ble Governor may kindly be obtained for the summoning of the State Assembly on September 27, 2022, as per the decision of the Government, as conveyed via this office memo no. 1/3/2017-3PA/469, dated 22.09.2022."

The reply of the government did not mention it wanted to table the confidence motion

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SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical/ symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/ Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

SCHEDULE OF THE SECURED ASSETS

Lot No.	Name of the Account, Borrower/ Guarantors Name, Name of the Branch	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged / Owner's Name (Mortgagors of Property(ies))	(A) Date of demand Notice u/s 13 (2) of SARFAESI Act 2002 (B.1) O/S amount as on date of 13 (2) notice (B.2) O/S amount as on given date (C) Possession date u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002 (D) Nature of possession symbolic/ physical/ constructive (E) Amount recovered after issuance of 13(2) notice (till 31.08.2022)	(A) Reserve Price (B) EMD (C) last date of deposit of EMD (D) Bid Increase Amount	Date/ Time of E-Auction	Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors
1.	M/S NAVEEN ENTERPRISES, Proprietor Sri Hari Om Yadav, S/O Sh Rajendra Singh, A/C No. 2374008700000412, 237400CF00000120 & 237400IC00000015, Bo. Kabilashpur (237400)	Mortgaged Properties situated at: Sale Deed No 3923 dated 20.07.2013 Mauza- Karmi, Thana No -104, Khata No. -02, Plot No. -62, Durgawati, Kaimur Area- 20 Decimal Boundary- North- Nij, South- Chhawar, East - Nij, West- Nahar, Road, Mortgagor: Sh. Hari Om Yadav, S/O Sh Rajendra Singh (237400)	(A) 19.06.2021 (B.1) Rs. 30,90,306.24 + Intt. Due from 01.04.2021 (B.2) Rs. 36,08,097.24 as on 31.08.2022 (C) 30.03.2022 (D) Symbolic (E) 1,02,001.00	(A) Rs. 49,18,000/- (B) Rs. 4,91,800/- (C) 26/10/2022 (D) Rs. 10,000/-	27/10/2022 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	Not Known
2.	M/S OM SAI RAM RICE MILL, Proprietor Sri Prem Kumar Pandey, S/O Maninath Pandey, A/C No. 2759008700007407, Bo. Thakurhat (275900)	Mortgaged Properties situated at: Sale Deed No 6234 dated - 10.08.2015 Mauza- SirGobardhanpur, Varanasi (UP), Arazi No mi. 1063, Khata No 1127, Plot No 168, Area 2156 sqft ie 200.37sqm, Boundary- North- Land Manu and others, South- Ramadhar Pandey, East - Kacha Rasta 20feet wide, West- Land Ramashankar Dubey, Mortgagor: Smt. Renu Pandey (Deceased), W/O Prem Kumar Pandey	(A) 17.06.2021 (B.1) Rs. 25,22,891.00 + int. due from 01.06.2021 (B.2) Rs. 29,13,239.00 as on 31.08.2022 (C) 10.05.2022 (D) Symbolic (E) 1,60,000.00	(A) Rs. 29,75,000/- (B) Rs. 2,97,500/- (C) 26/10/2022 (D) Rs. 10,000/-	27/10/2022 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	Not Known
3.	DEVENDRA KUMAR SINGH S/o Paras Nath Singh, A/C No- 2374008800015732 & 237400NC00000065 Bo: Kabilashpur (237400)	Mortgaged Properties situated at- Mauza- Chhitpur Khas, Pargana Dehat Amanat, Tehsil and Dist- Varanasi (UP), Arazi No 702 to the extent of 2549 sqft. Boundary- N- Biswanath Mishra, S- Rasta 8 feet wide, E- Rasta 8 feet wide, W- Rest Arazi No 702, Mortgagor: Sh Parasnath Singh S/o Late Shyam Narayan Singh	(A) 15.06.2021 (B.1) Rs. 23,86,151.46+ Intt due from 01.06.2021 (B.2) Rs. 26,31,070.46 as on 31.08.2022 (C) 30.03.2022 (D) Symbolic (E) 5,500.00	(A) Rs. 58,68,000/- (B) Rs. 5,86,800/- (C) 26/10/2022 (D) Rs. 10,000/-	27/10/2022 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	Not Known
4.	M/S SAROJ ENTERPRISES Proprietor Saroj Singh W/o Pramod Kumar Singh, A/C No- 2784008700002848, 278400IB00001971, 278400IC00000030 & 278400IL00000217 Bo: Gorsara (278400)	(1) Land & Building Situated At: Registered Gift Deed No 5291 dated -06.09.2017 Mauza Wasanpur, Thana Nuaon, Sub Division and Sub Registry office- Mohania, Dist Kaimur, thana No 245, Khata No 44, Plot No 60, Area- 50 Decimal, Boundary -North- Nagesh Tiwari Plot No-60, South- Road, East- Nachak Choubey, West- Jai Prakash Choubey S/o Tribhuvan Choubey Plot No 63, Mortgagor : Smt. Saroj Singh W/O Sh. Pramod Kumar Singh (2) Land & Building Situated At: Sale deed no- 2613, dated 22.07.2017, Flat No A-4, 1st Floor, Sai Saroop Apartmetn, Arazi No- 219/1, Mouza- Newada, Ward- Nagwa, Pargana- Dehat Amanat, Tehsil & District - Varanasi, Super build up area-109.3sqm i.e. 1176sqft, Boundary- North- Open Land Tara Patel, South- Open land Tara Patel, East- Open land Tara Patel, West- Common passage after that Flat noA-3, Mortgagor: Smt. Saroj Singh W/O Sh. Pramod Kumar Singh	(A) 18.11.2021 (B.1) Rs 1,87,91,268.18 + Intt. Due from 01.10.2021 & Other Charges. (B.2) Rs. 2,06,54,037.18 as on 31.08.2022 (C) 25.05.2022 (D) Symbolic (E) NIL	(A) Rs. 64,80,000/- (B) Rs. 6,48,000/- (C) 26/10/2022 (D) Rs. 10,000/-	27/10/2022 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	Not Known

1. The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions:
2. The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS"
3. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule hereinabove have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation.
4. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://www.mstcecommerce.com> on 27.10.2022 @ 10:30 AM
5. For detailed term and conditions of the sale, please refer www.ibapi.in, www.tenders.gov.in, www.mstcecommerce.com, <https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app>

Date : 20.09.2022
Place : Arrah
STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8 (6) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002
Authorised Officer Punjab National Bank Secured Creditor

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SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s), Guarantor(s) and Mortgager(s) that the below described immovable property-mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Punjab National Bank, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Punjab National Bank, Secured Creditor from the respective borrower(s), guarantor(s) and mortgager(s). The Reserve Price and the Earnest Money Deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

SCHEDULE OF THE SECURED ASSETS

Lot No.	Name of the Branch Name of the Account Name & Addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors Accounts	A) Dt. of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI ACT 2002 B) Outstanding Amount as on C) Possession Date u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002 D) Nature of Possession Symbolic/Physical/ Constructive	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged/Owner's Name (Mortgagors of property(ies))	A) Reserve Price (Rs. in Lacs) B) EMD (Last date of submitting KYC for depositing EMD) C) Bid Increase Amount	Date/ Time of E-Auction	Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors
1.	Branch: Morcha Road (2916), Patna A/C No.: 2916008700004841 Borrower: M/s Sakshi Enterprises Prop. Sri Kundan Kumar Jain S/o Sri Ravindra Prasad Jain	A) 29.06.2020 B) ₹15,91,792.66 + upto date interest & other charges C) 15.02.2022 D) Symbolic	EM of Land and Building situated at Mohalla-Tathagat Nagar, Patna City, Thana-Malsalami, Avar Registry Office-Patna City, Distt Registry Office and Distt.-Patna, Circle No.-226, Holding No.-33/37(P), Badahu Holding No.39/31(p), Present Holding No.-39B/31, Ward No.-71/56/37/32, Sheet No.-282, Thana Code-471, Municipal Survey Plot No.-693(P), Volume No.-229, CD No.-46/ year 2011, Pages From-387 to 400, Book No.-1, Area-12 Dhur 9.50 Durki (1,9492 Decimal) Vide Sale Deed No.-17273 Dated 24.06.2011. Pertaining to Smt. Rekha Devi Jain W/o Ravindra Prasad Jain, Boundry:- N-Corporation Gali, Municipal Survey Plot No.695, S-Koli Badahu, Sri Jaggu Paswan, E-Sri Rajesh Kumar Jaiswal, Part of Said Plot and Koli Badahu Sri Jaggu Paswan, W-Sri Braj Kishore Jaiswal, Part of Said Plot and Koli.	A) 20,00,000/- B) 2,00,000/- (10.10.2022) C) 50,000/-	14.10.2022 From 11:00 am to 12:00 noon	Nil
2.	Branch: Morcha Road (2916), Patna A/C No.: 291600SG00000060 Borrower: M/s Awadh Bekary (Prop.: Sri Awadh Kishore Mishra)	A) 30.06.2021 B) ₹19,23,526.00 + upto date interest & other charges C) 16.09.2021 D) Symbolic	EM of land and building situated at Mouza-Simil Muradpur, Patnacity, Thana-Malsalami, Sub Registry Office-Patnacity, Sadar Registry and Distt.-Patna, Taouzi Bihar Sarkar, Thana No.38, Khata No.-904, SC Khesra No.-2167(P), Area-3-1/8 Decimal vide Sale Deed No.80 dated 12.01.2000 pertaining to Smt. Radhika Devi W/o Sri Ram Dayal Mishra. Boundary: North-Common Rasta Badahu Adastral Survey Khesra No.2169, South-Sri Ram Prasad Yadav Part of Said Plot, East-Niz Lekhyakarigan no.1 and 2, Part of said Plot, West-Sri Jai Dayal Mishra, Part of said Plot.	A) 27,65,000/- B) 2,76,500/- (10.10.2022) C) 50,000/-	14.10.2022 From 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm	Nil
3.	Branch: Patliputra Colony UBI, Patna (99120) A/C No.: 0991210031985 Borrower: M/s Priyanka Feeds Prop. Smt. Priyanka Srivastava	A) 15.01.2022 B) Rs. 17,92,343.00 + upto date interest & other charges C) 21.04.2022 D) Symbolic	EM of Flat No.-202 at 2nd Floor along with car parking and proportionate portion in land situated at "RADHA SADAN" at Mohalla-Danapur Chittrakut Nagar, Survey Mouza-Danapur Sahzadpur, Thana, Avar Registry Office-Danapur, Distt. Registry Office and Distt.-Patna, Revenue Thana No.-21, Touzi No.-5400, Khata No.-223, Survey Plot No.-637, Surper built up area-1215 sq. ft. vide Sale Deed No.-13526 dated 13.12.2016 pertaining to Smt. Priyanka Srivastava D/o Sri Kameshwar Pd. Srivastava. Boundary of Flat: North-Flat No.-201, South-Open Space of Apartment, East-Open Space of Apartment, West-Open Space of Apartment. Boundary of Apartment: North-Sahayak Sarak, South-Sri Ram Prit Singh and Others, East-Part Plot No.-637, West-Smt. Chandrakanta Devi Part Plot No.-637.	A) 41,14,000/- B) 4,11,400/- (10.10.2022) C) 1,00,000/-	14.10.2022 From 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Nil
4.	Branch: BARH (0569), Patna A/C No.: 0569008700010323 056900IL00000331 056900CF00000715 Borrower: M/S Nisha Enterprises Prop.-Sri Arun Kumar	A) 28.06.2021 B) Rs. 26,24,788.35 + upto date interest & other charges C) 20.09.2021 D) Symbolic	EM of land and building vide deed no.4828 dtd: 06.09.2007 situated at Mouza-Kajichak, Pargana-Gayaspur, Thana and Sub Division and Sub Registry Office - Barh, Sadar Registry and Distt.-Patna, Taouzi No.8283, Thana No.57, Khata No.111, Khesra No.472, Area- 4.0625 Dec. in the name of Sri Kameshwar Prasad S/O Sri Ram Swarup Yadav. Boundary:- North-Madan Mahto Hissedar No Haza, South-Raghu Yadav, East-Ramswaroop Mahto Mishri Mahto, West-Raghu Yadav.	A) 15,10,000/- B) 1,51,000/- (10.10.2022) C) 50,000/-	14.10.2022 From 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm	Nil
5.	Branch: Exhibition Road (0380), Patna. A/C No.: 0380008700008024 Borrower: M/S Nabh Steel Traders (Prop.- Sri Gautam Singh)	A) 18.10.2021 B) Rs. 3,55,30,462.00 + upto date interest & other charges C) 06.04.2022 D) Symbolic	EM of land and building situated at Mouza-Kumharar, Survey Thana-Patnacity, Hal Thana-Agamkuan, Sub Registry and Distt.- Patna, Touzi-Bihar Sarkar, Thana No.-12, Khata No.-431, Khesra Survey Plot No.1241(P), Area-2 Katha (6.25 Decimal) Vide Sale Deed No.29166 dated 09.12.2010 pertaining to Sri Sudhir Prasad Singh S/o Late Ramshlok Singh. Boundary: North-15 feet wide Road, South-Part of Plot No.-1241, East-Mukesh Kumar Lakhaiyar and Ratnesh Kumar Lakhaiyar, West-Mukesh Kumar Lakhaiyar.	A) 80,00,000/- B) 8,00,000/- (22.10.2022) C) 2,00,000/-	27.10.2022 From 11:00 am to 12:00 noon	Nil
6.	Branch: SME (3891), Patna. A/C No.: 389100NC00007306 Borrower: Smt. Kumari Vijaya W/o Sri Akhilesh Mishra	A) 15.11.2021 B) Rs. 21,75,382.00 + upto date interest & other charges C) 22.08.2022 D) Symbolic	EM of Land and Building situated at Mouza-New Hamichak, Pargana & Survey Thana-Pahulwari Sharif, Hal Thana-Beur, Distt.-Patna, Thana No.-34, Taouzi Bihar Sarkar, Khata No.-102, Khesra Survey Plot No.-18 & 19(P), Area-10 Dhur (1.5625 Decimal) vide Sale Deed No.-7704 dated 16.08.2016 pertaining to Smt. Kumari Vijaya W/o Sri Akhilesh Mishra. Boundary: North-8 feet wide road left by purchaser, South-Chandeshwar Rai, East-Emroja Kharidar Smt. Kamini Tiwary, West-Part Plot Nij Pattidar.	A) 43,00,000/- B) 4,30,000/- (22.10.2022) C) 1,00,000/-	27.10.2022 From 12:00 noon to 01:00 pm	Nil
7.	Branch: SME (3891), Patna. A/C No.: 3891008700001995 & 389100NG00008154 Borrower: M/s R K Poultry Farm Prop.: Sri Rohan Kumar Chouhan S/o Sri Raj Kumar Chouhan	A) 24.03.2022 B) Rs. 3,57,34,675.00 + upto date interest & other charges C) 22.06.2022 D) Symbolic	Simple Mortgage Deed No. 7526 dated 14.12.2016 situated at Mouza-Gyaspur Izara, Revenue Thana-51, Anchal, RO-Hajipur, Distt./DSR-Vaishali, Khata no -538, Khesra No.-2362, Total Area-56350 Sq.ft (44100sq ft + 12250 Sq.ft) equivalent to 1 bigha 9 Katha 13.25 dhur or 1 acre 29 decimial. Boundary of Area-44100 sq.ft.-North-Bihar Spunj Pipe & Nizi Road, South-Niz, East-Niz, West-Village Road. Boundary of Area-12250 sq.ft.-North-Bihar Spunj Pipe & Nizi Road, South-Niz, East-Niz, West-Nizi Road approach Road 12 ft.	A) 2,45,00,000/- B) 24,50,000/- (22.10.2022) C) 5,00,000/-	27.10.2022 From 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Nil
8.	Branch: Anishabad (6059), Patna. A/C No.: 6059008700000256 Borrower: M/s Kaya Fashion Prop.-Smt. Anita Kumari W/o Sri Ajit Kumar	A) 15.11.2021 B) Rs. 12,15,921.02 + upto date interest & other charges C) 14.06.2022 D) Symbolic	EM of Land and Building situated at Mouza-Salempur Dumra, Pragana and Survey Thana-Pahulwari, Thana No.-10, Hal Thana-Sastry Nagar, Sub & Sadar Registry Office and Distt.-Patna Taouzi No.-5296, Khata No.-174, Khesra Survey Plot No.-301(P), Area-2.0 Decimal pertaining to Smt. Geeta Devi W/o Late Sahdeo Prasad Mishra. Boundary:- North-3 feet rasta in Plot No.-302, South-Plot No.-297, Indrapuri Colony, East-No Haza Niz Manmokir, West-Plot No.-300.	A) 40,50,000/- B) 4,05,000/- (22.10.2022) C) 1,00,000/-	27.10.2022 From 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm	Nil

1. The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions.
2. The properties are being sold on "as is where is basis" and "as is what is basis" and "Whatever there is basis".
3. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule hereinabove have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation.
4. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://www.mstcecommerce.com> on date & time as per detail given above.
5. For detailed term and condition of the sale, please refer www.ibapi.in, www.tenders.gov.in, www.mstcecommerce.com, <https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app>

Date : 26.09.2022
Place : Patna
STATUTORY 15/30 DAYS NOTICE UNDER THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002
Authorized Officer Punjab National Bank

10 GOVT & POLITICS

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



FLYING OUT

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi is expected to visit Japan to attend the state funeral for former PM of Japan Shinzo Abe on Tuesday. The Prime Minister is expected to leave on Monday evening. The funeral is expected to be attended by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, US Vice President Kamala Harris, former US President Barack Obama among others. In all, about 4,300 people, including 700 from overseas, are expected to attend. Representatives from 218 foreign countries, regions and international organizations will attend. China will send Wan Gang, vice chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, while Russia will send Mikhail Shvydkoy, special representative of the Russian President for international cultural cooperation.

PLAYING IT SAFE

AS CONGRESS struggled to put its house in order Rajasthan on Sunday, Bharatpur MLA Subhash Garg, the sole representative of the Rashtriya Lok Dal in the Assembly, suggested he was against any attempt to replace Ashok Gehlot with Sachin Pilot as the Chief Minister. Garg said the Congress should remember about the "conspiracy to topple the government in connivance with the BJP" in 2020. However, hours later, RLD president and Rajya Sabha MP Jayant Chaudhary appeared to distance the party from Garg's remarks. "We have not left any stone unturned in maintaining the alliance in Rajasthan and our stand remains unchanged. If any new equation is formed after the election of the Congress president, then the decision of the post of CM in the state will also have to be taken by the Congress," tweeted Chaudhary, who has been trying to expand the RLD's base in Rajasthan ever since bagging eight seats in Uttar Pradesh.

'We follow party line; population growth or terror threats, it is agenda of the party'

FORMER KISHANGANJ MP and Bihar minister SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN speaks to SANTOSH SINGH about Union Home Minister Amit Shah's two-day visit to the state's Seemanchal region and the Opposition's allegations that the BJP is trying to polarise the situation by making claims of "infiltration". Excerpts:

What is the message of Amit Shah's Seemanchal trip?

We use the term "Seemavarti (border)" districts for Purnia, Kishanganj, Araria, and Katihar. They either share the border with Nepal or Bangladesh. After the RJD joined hands with the JD(U) recently, there was a sense of fear. Shah's visit instilled a sense of faith and security as he gave priority to security concerns of the people because of unlawful activities along the border.

Can you elaborate on the fear factor?

I am talking about anti-national activities along the border. Central intelligence and investigating agencies have flagged some terror modules over the past few years. The Union home minister reassured people regarding border security.

How do you react to the Grand Alliance's allegations of the BJP doing politics of polarisation through the Seemanchal message?

One knows that the four border districts have a substantial Muslim population. As these districts share the border with Bangladesh, Nepal, it has been under 24-hour vigilance. Whether it is infiltration, drug-peddling or the issue of fake currency, it is reported from bordering areas... We cannot fall into the Opposition's trap and talk about polarisation.

Several of your colleagues have been raising issues of infiltration in Seemanchal. How big is the issue?

Since it is an open border, infiltration is often reported. Even the UPA government acknowledged infiltration from Bangladesh to Bihar to be a matter of serious concern. But I wonder why the UPA government did not do anything to check it.



THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW

WITH SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN, BJP LEADER

The BJP has also spoken about the higher rate of Muslim population growth.

The high Muslim population growth is because of the region's backwardness and lack of awareness among people. It is surely a matter of concern and this is why we have been harping on development. If some of our leaders have been raising it, no one should have any objection. We are quoting government data that says the region recorded a 10 to 15 per cent growth rate as compared to a 4.5 per cent national growth rate among Muslims.

On one hand, the BJP talks about development; on the other, you have leaders such as Giriraj Singh. Is not it twin-track politics?

Rather, we follow one-track politics. It does not matter what a Hussain or a Singh says, our all leaders follow the party line in their distinct ways. If we flag concerns about terror threats, population growth rate, and border security, it is very much in line with the party's policy and strategy... As for the development of the region, Amit Shah has spoken about more than a dozen major road, railways, and bridge projects for the region. A big group of hotels is also going to open its hotel in Purnia soon.

FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com

MEETING DAYS AFTER PAWAR HINTED AT TMC THAW

Lalu, Nitish urge Sonia: Take lead in bringing Opp together

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

SENDING A clear message to some parties in the Opposition which are pursuing the idea of a non-Congress front against the BJP, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and RJD chief Lalu Prasad Sunday met Congress president Sonia Gandhi — a rare such interaction among the three — and asked her to take the lead in bringing together an Opposition front.

Their meeting with Sonia came days after NCP chief Sharad Pawar said that Trinamool Congress chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was ready to bury her differences with the Congress in national interest, and come together to form an Opposition alliance ahead of the 2024 general elections.

Even while agreeing that a credible anti-BJP front is not possible by keeping the Congress out, some Opposition leaders have been suggesting that the virtually defunct UPA be revived and that leadership roles — like that of convenor — be given to regional chieftains to make the alliance broad-based.

Nitish and Lalu on Sunday suggested Sonia should take the lead in nudging the parties together on one page. "Together we met and held discussions with madam and you know that we believe several parties of the country should unite and work together for the country and its progress. We discussed all these issues... But now elections for



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar with RJD chief Lalu Prasad after the meeting with Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi. Prem Nath Pandey

their party's (the Congress's) president is underway... She will say something, finally, after all that," Nitish told reporters after the meeting with Sonia.

"The BJP has to be ousted to save the country. Everyone has to unite, like we came together in Bihar, and send the BJP packing. It has found a response across the country. We are together and we requested Soniji that you (the Congress) are the largest party... aap isme sab ko bulaiyie (you call everyone for this). Together we will sit and talk and send off the

BJP," Lalu said.

Nitish said there could be more meetings after the Congress organisational polls.

Among the Opposition parties, while the Aam Aadmi Party has maintained its distance from a front, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) and INLD are said to be in favour of a non-Congress coalition. The Left parties have been of the view that a national front to provide an alternative to the BJP is possible only after the elections. In the stand taken by the parties are their own respec-

tive compulsions. The Congress is one of the main rivals of the TRS and INLD in Telangana and Haryana, respectively, while the Left can't share the stage with the Congress in Kerala and with the TMC in Bengal.

But Pawar's statement that Mamata was ready to work with the Congress signals that considerable groundwork has already been done to iron out differences. Asked about parties like AAP, Nitish said: "Vichar ekta ka hi hai (the thinking is of unity)... there is no issue in that. But to say something, kahan, kahan kaun, kaun (where and who), that will take some more days," he said.

Lalu, who has been part of the UPA before, has enjoyed cordial relations with Sonia for long, though this was after some gap that the two leaders (who have both been ailing) met. It is perhaps the first time though that Nitish, who was part of the NDA till recently, was part of such a meeting, especially on issues regarding Opposition unity.

Lalu said Sonia told them she will meet them again with the new Congress chief after the party presidential elections are over. "The Congress has always been against the BJP. The country is heading towards dictatorship. Issues are not being resolved. We will meet her again," Lalu said.

Asked how Opposition parties can be united given the differences among them, Nitish said: "The parties that we are talking to... we certainly tell them that we all need to unite. It will take some time. Now we are just giving suggestions."

BHARAT JODO YATRA



Cong leader Rahul Gandhi with MP Ramya Haridas (left) and a supporter during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Thrissur, Kerala. PTI

All of BJP wanted to ban English, says Rahul; meets ex-servicemen

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPTEMBER 25

CONGRESS LEADER Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said the entire BJP leadership, including AB Vajpayee, wanted to ban English in India.

Addressing party workers at Cheruthuruthy in Thrissur, marking the day's leg of Bharat Jodo Yatra, Rahul said the idea of his yatra was to build bridges between people, between religions and between different communities.

"The BJP and RSS are working to destroy the idea of India. The entire BJP, including Vajpayee, wanted to ban English. They gave long speeches on how English should be banned. When India attained independence, we sent the British back. We did not ban English. In fact, we promoted English. If India had

banned English after attaining independence, would there be an IT industry in the country? Would there be people going to the US? Would there be people who build bridges between the industry in the US and industry in India," he said.

He said the BJP and RSS are attacking the idea of India. "They work for a few people, not for the entire mass of the country. For them, India is a place to be ruled. For us, India is a voice to be heard. That is why we are walking 3,500 km. Because, we believe in your voice," he said.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra is currently touring Thrissur district.

Resuming the yatra later, Rahul interacted with ex-servicemen at Wadakkanchery in Thrissur. A few participants in the interaction spoke about the Agnipath scheme and wanted Rahul to seek its rollback. They also raised concerns about the one rank one pension scheme.

Mamata: Don't believe in revenge, else predecessors would be in jail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 25

CHIEF MINISTER Mamata Banerjee Sunday said she does not believe in politics of revenge because of which she did not send leaders of the previous government to jail after coming to power. Without naming the party, the Trinamool Congress chief also alleged that "a political party engages in only defaming Bengal in numerous ways".

Launching the Puja edition of the Trinamool mouthpiece *Jago Bangla* in Kolkata, the chief minister also hit out at the central agencies, which are probing several corruption cases against some of the Trinamool ministers in the state. "There are various (central) agencies in Delhi like the Moon, Sun, planet and stars sitting on the heads... Let Maa Durga give everybody power to fight," the chief minister added.

"At one point, I used to feel ashamed going to Delhi because a political party engages in only defaming Bengal in numerous ways. Outsiders have prepared this mentality using money, certain digital platforms, and social media networks," she said.

Hitting out at the opposition CPI(M) without taking its name, Banerjee said she doesn't believe in the politics of revenge. "This is why we didn't arrest anyone despite 34 years of corruption..."



Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee paints the eyes of a Durga idol in Kolkata on Sunday. Partha Paul

ONCE DACOIT, NOW CHEETAH MITRA, RAMESH SIKARWAR SAYS: WILL PROTECT FOREST THAT SHELTERED ME 'If anyone attacks a cheetah in Kuno, they will have to face me'

ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THROUGH THE 1970s and 80s, Ramesh Sikarwar and his gang of dacoits in Chambal would often spend their nights in a forest — known today as the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.

It is this old connection that prompted Sikarwar, now 72, to come forward as a "cheetah mitra" at the national park. "The Kuno forest gave us shelter, protected us. We had a deep love for the forest. It is time now for me to protect it," he says.

Sikarwar's name still carries fear in the region — the dreaded former dacoit was accused of around 70 murders and 300 kid-

nappings. Now, he is a farmer and one of the 500 cheetah mitras from the 51 villages in the area who have been trained to create awareness among the villagers about the animals. The other volunteers include school teachers, village headmen and patwaris.

"Once we knew the cheetahs were coming, we started running an awareness campaign about the cheetahs in the surrounding villages. In July, when we started these campaigns, we asked for volunteers to become cheetah mitras. That is when Sikarwar, who is well known in the area, came forward," says Chief Wildlife Warden Madhya Pradesh JS Chauhan.

Speaking with *The Indian Express*, Sikarwar described his



Ramesh Sikarwar has been given rifles and ammunition by the government for his "protection".

past life and turn to dacoity: "I was just 23 years old when I became a Baghi (dacoit). My father had to leave our village of Lahroni, after my uncle grabbed our property and refused to part with it despite the property being in my father's name. We were poor, he was rich. We relocated to another village. When I was older, and my father had passed, my sister was getting married, I went to my uncle for cattle to give in my sister's wedding. He refused. I shot him and ran away," he says.

Over the next few years, Sikarwar was to establish a gang of 32 dacoits that would operate across Gwalior, Morena, Guna, Jhansi, Tikamgarh in Madhya Pradesh and another 12 districts in Rajasthan.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE SUCCESSFUL transfer of Namibian cheetahs to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh was the focus of the 93rd "Mann Ki Baat" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi today, who said that a task force has been set up to monitor the progress of cheetahs adapting to their new environment.

The PM repeated his request for patience, saying it will be several months before the cheetahs finally adapt and an assessment is made by the task force, only after which the government will take a call on whether Kuno National Park will be opened to the public.

Modi said the government has organised a competition on MyGov platform, where people can propose names for cheetahs and the cheetah campaign, which should be "traditional" and related to Indian "society and culture".

The Prime Minister paid homage to Deen Dayal Upadhyay and Bhagat Singh on their birthday anniversary, adding that the recent decision to rename Chandigarh airport as the Shaheed Bhagat Singh airport is a tribute to the martyr.

Modi further talked of the progress made in the country to establish sign language. "A big problem in India for years was that there were no clear gestures, no standards for sign language. To overcome these difficulties, the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre was established in 2015. I am happy that this institution has thus far prepared a dictionary comprising 10,000 words and expressions. On September 23, Sign Language Day, many school courses were also launched in sign language. Emphasis has been laid to maintain a fixed standard for sign language in the National Education Policy. It is being further disseminated through videos. On YouTube, many people have started their channels in sign

language. It is benefiting millions now," Modi said, adding that he especially mentioned the campaign on Mann Ki Baat so that awareness about sign language increases in the country.

The PM added that he had received a copy of the Hemkosh, one of the oldest dictionaries in the Assamese language, written in Braille.

Prepared in the 19th century, the braille edition of Hemkosh is around 10,000 pages and is going to be published in more than 15 volumes with more than one lakh words translated, he said.

Modi also said that he met a girl from Surat several days ago, named Avni, who has severe Down's Syndrome and has benefited immensely from yoga.

In today's Mann Ki Baat, the Prime Minister has also talked about the environmental challenges, including climate change, and said "litter spread on our beaches is disturbing". "It becomes our responsibility to make serious efforts to tackle these challenges," he said. Wishing people on the festive season, which will begin Monday with the first day of Navratri, Modi said: "...The trend of jute, cotton, banana fibre and many such traditional bags is on the rise again. It is our duty to promote them."

Free vaccine drive perks up 3rd dose numbers, but adult coverage still at 21%

ANONNADUTT
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

DESPITE A MARKED increase in the number of Covid-19 precaution doses administered after the government started offering the vaccine free to all adults beginning July 15, just over a fifth of the eligible population in the country has taken it. The 75-day drive for those eligible in the 18-59 years age group ends coming Friday (September 30).

So far, only 22.24 per cent of the adult population in the country has received the third precaution dose, with the coverage among those above 60 years more than double that of those in the 18-59 years bracket.

While only 17.58 per cent of 77 crore persons in the 18-59 years group have received the third dose, it is much higher in percentage terms — 48.5 per cent — in the 60-plus age group which has 13.7 crore persons, according to data from the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Till mid-July i.e. before the start of the free vaccination drive for adults, only 8 per cent of those in the 18-59 years group and 27 per cent of those over 60 years, had taken the precaution dose.

Since the free drive commenced, 14.6 crore precaution doses have been administered; of this, 12.7 crore were between 18 years and 59 years, according to the data. So far, India has administered a total of 20.2 crore precaution doses.

Explaining the possible reasons for the low precautionary dose numbers, Dr Sunela Garg, Professor of Community Medicine at Maulana Azad Medical College and a member of the Lancet Commission on Covid-19 in India, said: "You see the number of cases and the severity of the infection has gone down, so vaccination is no longer a priority for people. We always see an increase in vaccination when cases increase. Another reason for the hesitancy is people see that even those who have taken both the doses are getting the infection. To reduce this, we will have to look at newer versions of the vaccines that are better able to protect against infections caused by the current variants in circulation."

A senior official involved in Delhi's vaccination drive said, "With people needing only primary vaccination certificates for entry to various places or travel, they do not feel the need for getting the precaution dose."

Ever since India started administering the third dose in January this year, it has remained free for those over 60 years — they are at a higher risk of severe disease and death. It was also available free to all healthcare and frontline workers, who are at an increased risk of being exposed to the infection.

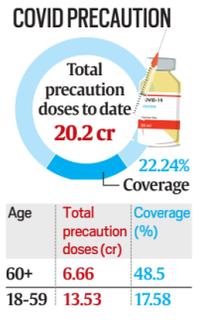
During the free vaccination drive, states were asked to make an "ambitious" push by organising camps. The announcement for the free drive came days after the government reduced the duration between the second and precaution doses to six months from nine months.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

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Why the hesitancy

NOT MANY people are queueing up for the third precaution dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. There are many reasons for this, the primary being low number of cases and less severity. To reduce hesitancy, a sharper awareness campaign will help, as also introduction of new effective vaccines against the existing virus variants.

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'Khalistan Referendum' seen as trigger, MEA advisory splits Indians in Canada

DAKSH PANWAR
TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 25

RANKED No. 12 on the 2022 Global Peace Index, Canada is trying to make sense of India's recent advisory that noted "a sharp increase in incidents of hate crimes, sectarian violence and anti-India activities in Canada". The leading daily here, Toronto Star, captured the bewilderment of many: "The language employed by Indian diplomats was that which one might expect to be used more to describe Iraq, Libya or Afghanistan".

In April, an Indian student, Kartik Vasudev, was gunned down in front of a subway station in Toronto. More recently, on September 12, another Indian student, Satwinder Singh, was fatally shot in a shooting rampage that resulted in two more deaths in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). But it hasn't been established yet if these were hate-motivated attacks. Toronto Police say they haven't seen a notable increase in hate crimes targeting people of Indian or South Asian descent.

Two Hindu temples in the GTA have reported acts of vandalism in the last few months. Last year, a Khalsa religious school was also vandalised in Brampton, a large city bordering Toronto that has the highest concentration of Indians in Canada.

Yet, many feel the trigger for the advisory is a controversial September 18 "Khalistan Referendum" in Brampton, held by a pro-Khalistan organisation employed by Indian diplomats. While the organisers claimed a turnout of about 100,000, some said the figure was "wildly exaggerated".

The advisory is being seen as a pointed rebuke from New Delhi to the Justin Trudeau government, given Trudeau's support to the farmers' protests in 2020. The referendum has put many Sikhs, who tend to distance themselves from hardline groups like the SFJ and aren't exactly vociferous supporters of the Indian government, in a bind. Meanwhile, the results of the referendum will be declared once the voting has taken place at other venues across

Canada and the world. Besides Brampton, voting has already been held in places such as London, Rome and Geneva.

The SFJ called the advisory "a threat to the freedom of speech and expression of Sikhs in Canada who are supporting liberation of Punjab". "The MEA is creating an atmosphere of 'hate-mongering' after the Modi regime failed to stop the Khalistan referendum through diplomatic channels," SFJ's general counsel Gurbhawan Singh Pannun said in a statement.

The SFJ, which is banned in India, is said to have claimed responsibility for the Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) attack at Punjab Intelligence headquarters in Mohali in May this year. Khalistan has long been a wedge issue between Sikhs and Hindus in Canada. Daljit Singh Sekhon, a religious leader who identifies as a Khalistan supporter, said there's no threat of violence between the two communities.

However, Manan Gupta, a Brampton resident who often speaks in local media on community issues, said there have been attempts to create a divide between the Indian diaspora. He cited recent attacks on a few local Punjabi broadcasters seen as pro-Indian government.

"The ministry had no other way but to raise alarm to protect and safeguard the interest of Indian nationals. This was also intended to let Canada know that India won't let its national interests be compromised due to vote bank polarisation games played by Canadian politicians. I don't think we will see Leicester (UK) type incidents but there have been numerous attempts to create a rift between communities. This trend needs to be reversed," Gupta said.

Diaspora politics, over the last few years, has led to tensions between Sikhs and Indo-Canadian Hindus. Last year, at the height of farmers' protests, there were support rallies and pro-Indian government counter-rallies in Canada.

But that's no cause for alarm, said Mississauga-based lawyer and community leader Harminder Dhillon, who has

lived in Canada for nearly four decades. "It's a peaceful, diverse and welcoming country. There are incidents, but these are few and far between. I haven't seen any uptick in violence against Indians recently," Dhillon said.

"Regarding sectarian divisions, it's a painful reality of the diaspora — it's tied to whatever is happening back in South Asia. Are the divisions sharper than they were in the past? It's difficult to quantify, but sure, sometimes there's tension and it flares up, then it calms down. But most of the time it's related to the events happening back home," Dhillon added.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPTEMBER 25

VETERAN CONGRESS leader and former Kerala minister Aryadan Muhammed died in Kozhikode on Sunday at 87.

Muhammed, a prominent Muslim face of the Congress in Kerala, was elected to the state Assembly eight times from Nilambur constituency in Malappuram. He served as a minister for four terms.

He had joined the Congress in 1952 and became a member of Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee in 1958. Later, he served as the president of Malappuram District Congress Committee and as a state leader of INTUC, the Congress's trade union wing. Within the Congress, Muhammed was a prominent leader of the "A" group led by A K Antony.

Muhammed had also been accused in the murder of communist leader and former legislator K Kunhali in 1969 but was acquitted by a court. He also ran into controversies several times after he dared to take on IJML, which dominated Muslim politics in Malappuram.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday visited Nilambur and paid his respects to the late leader, calling him a "pillar".

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EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, SEPTEMBER 25

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday claimed that incomes of farmers have more than doubled since 2014 after Prime Minister Narendra Modi set the target for his government to achieve a two-fold rise in farm incomes by 2022. The CM added that despite their dependence on nature, the farmers of UP have proved their potential by producing record quantities of foodgrain and the welfare programmes rolled out by the UP government and Centre have helped in increasing incomes of farmers.

The chief minister was speaking during a programme organised to distribute high-yield seed kits to mark the birth

anniversary of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ideologue Deen Dayal Upadhyay in Lucknow.

Talking about how the state's farmers are aware of the welfare schemes launched for them, Adityanath said the government is running campaigns to spread word about them. He directed agriculture department officials to organise camps in every district and publicise the government schemes for farmers.

Along with seed kits, the chief minister also distributed 'Meri Policy-Mera Haath' certificates to the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and approval letters for setting up solar irrigation pump to PM Kusum Yojana beneficiaries. Besides, he flagged off 21 tractors for agricultural fields.

He added that BJP's "double engine government" stands with

"annadata" farmers. Adityanath also said that when the world was reeling under the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the agricultural sector stood firm. "There were some concerns related to standing crops of wheat, but I assured farmers that they would be getting combine machines. Officials were directed to set up a helpdesk and provide assistance to farmers for harvesting crops and transporting them to purchasing centres. During the pandemic, sugar mills in the country and world were closed. However, all 119 sugar mills in the state were operational. Trade stopped, traffic was disrupted, but one community that continued to work was that of farmers. They provided ration to everyone without discrimination. It was due to their hard work that no one died of starvation during Covid," he added.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath pays tribute to Deendayal Upadhyay on his birth anniversary, in Lucknow on Sunday. PTI

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Conduct social audit of mid-day meal scheme by Nov 30: Centre

Many states, UTs have not submitted their final reports

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE CENTRE has directed the states and Union Territories to carry out the social audit of the mid-day meal scheme in every district by November 30, with local authorities across the country running behind schedule in completing the task mandatory under the National Food Security Act, 2013.

While many states have informed the Centre that the social audit exercise has been initiated, but in many cases in the past, the final reports were never submitted to the Department of School Education and Literacy under the Ministry of Education.

For instance, the ministry told Meghalaya in February this year that it has not still received the final audit report of the year 2019-20. In the case of Assam, the 2020-21 reports are awaited, which was conveyed to the state government in May.

A social audit of the scheme not only helps in detecting irregularities, including siphoning or diversion of funds, but also helps state and central authorities to get first-hand feedback from the local communities right at the



Social audit of the mid-day meal scheme can help detect irregularities. File

gram sabha level.

Earlier this year, during the Centre's meeting with the states where the annual budget and work plan were approved, it emerged that in at least nine states and four UTs, social audit for 2021-22 were not even initiated.

"During the PAB-PM POSHAN meetings also the states and UTs have been directed to conduct social audit in all schools covering all districts for the year 2021-22 and also advised to conduct social audit of the scheme in all the districts every year. You are therefore requested to initiate action for conduct of social audit of PM POSHAN in all districts in your

state/UT for the year 2021-22 on priority basis and as per MoE guidelines and conclude it with mandatory Public hearing by 30th November 2022," the ministry communicated to the states and UTs on August 31.

States which reported not to have carried out social audits in 2021-22 include Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Telangana, Punjab, Odisha, Haryana, Chhattisgarh. In the UTs of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Puducherry, Ladakh and Lakshadweep, social audits have never been done, show records.

While many cited school closure on account of Covid-19 as a reason for not doing it, they were supposed to audit even the distribution of dry kits, which replaced the hot cooked meals during the prolonged closure of schools. Rajasthan, for example, was among the states which did that, according to records of mid-day meal Public Advisory Board meets.

On the other hand, even among states which technically conducted audits, the guidelines were not followed. Gujarat, for instance, informed that it is carrying out audits in 60 schools of only three districts, instead of all as the rules mandate.

आभानेरी उत्सव

ABHANERI FESTIVAL
27-28 सितम्बर, 2022 - वीसा

भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, अंतरिक्ष विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
विक्रम साराभाई अंतरिक्ष केंद्र / VIKRAM SARABHAI SPACE CENTRE
निर्माण एवं अन्वेषण गूप / CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP
तिरुवनंतपुरम/THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 22 / (फोन नं./ Ph. No. 0471- 2564568/5669/4537/4545/5275)

ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करते हुए संक्षिप्त सूचना / BRIEF NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से सम्मिश्र श्रेणी के अधीन निम्नलिखित कार्य के लिए ई-टेंडरिंग द्वारा अनिन्वाइन मद-दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।
On behalf of the President of India, online item-rate tenders are invited through E-tendering for the following work under Composite Category.

क्र.सं./Sl. No.	कार्य का शीर्षक तथा ई-निविदा सूचना सं./ Title of work & E-Tender Notice No.	पी.ए.सी./ P.A.C.
1.	टर्म्स, वीएसएससी, तुंबा में गोकी विधा से पीएसएलवी के लिए अपक्षरक उत्पादों का उत्पादन हेतु प्रस्तावित सुविधाएं (सिविल, पावर, विद्युत, यंत्रिकी तथा वास्तुकूलन कार्य) / Proposed facilities for production of Ablative products for PSLV on GOCO mode at TERLS, VSSC, Thumba (Civil, PH, Electrical, Mechanical & Air Conditioning works) NIT No. VSSC/CMG/C01/16/2022-23 Dt. 22.09.2022	र./Rs. 7902.95 लाख/Lakhs

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EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPTEMBER 25

VETERAN CONGRESS leader and former Kerala minister Aryadan Muhammed died in Kozhikode on Sunday at 87.

Muhammed, a prominent Muslim face of the Congress in Kerala, was elected to the state Assembly eight times from Nilambur constituency in Malappuram. He served as a minister for four terms.

He had joined the Congress in 1952 and became a member of Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee in 1958. Later, he served as the president of Malappuram District Congress Committee and as a state leader of INTUC, the Congress's trade union wing. Within the Congress, Muhammed was a prominent leader of the "A" group led by A K Antony.

Muhammed had also been accused in the murder of communist leader and former legislator K Kunhali in 1969 but was acquitted by a court. He also ran into controversies several times after he dared to take on IJML, which dominated Muslim politics in Malappuram.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday visited Nilambur and paid his respects to the late leader, calling him a "pillar".

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The Indian EXPRESS

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Why we met the RSS chief



S Y QURAIISHI

Strong belief in dialogue, and concerns about situation of Muslims were behind the initiative

RUSSIAN ROULETTE

President Putin's strategy of coercive mobilisation to reverse setback in Ukraine is not winning him friends at home

ON THE MILITARY back foot in the Ukraine war, under growing political pressure at home to turn the tide, and facing international diplomatic isolation, the Russian president Vladimir Putin has turned to the mobilisation of a larger number of Russian troops, annexation of the occupied territories and nuclear blackmail. These escalatory steps, however, are likely to compound the Russian problems from Putin's original sin — initiating an entirely avoidable war in Ukraine. Putin's assumptions that Ukrainians will welcome the invading Russian troops as "liberators" and that the government led by Volodymyr Zelenskyy would simply melt away amidst the shock of Russian aggression have turned out to be utterly unrealistic. Putin was hoping to see the Russian troops march to the victory drums in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, soon after the invasion at the end of February. He now finds himself presiding over one of the greatest strategic blunders in the history of modern statecraft that will impose huge costs not only for him and the regime he built in Moscow over the last two decades, but also the Russian nation.

The bet on a quick victory saw Putin embark on the invasion of a large country with a limited force of barely 200,000 troops. As the Russian aggression met fierce resistance from Ukraine and growing Western support, Putin has struggled to regain the initiative in a war that is now seven months old. While the initial support for the invasion was high, few Russians are willing to make personal sacrifices for an expeditionary war that is going badly. Unlike the high morale of the Ukrainian armed forces fighting for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their homeland, the Russian troops do not seem to have the will to fight this war. Poorly trained and badly led in a war based on terrible political judgement, the Russian troops have had no real motivation to fight. Instead of reversing course, Putin has chosen to hunker down amidst the pressure from the right wing to elevate the war effort and take new risks.

Efforts in the last few weeks at recruiting more citizens on a voluntary basis into the war spluttered amidst the limited popular enthusiasm. The latest drive at coercive mobilisation, however, is leading to protests and carries the danger of turning the military failure in Ukraine into a domestic political crisis. Increasing the penalties for surrender or refusal to fight are not going to make the Russian troops more motivated. Nor does the plan to turn the occupied territories in Ukraine into "Russian motherland" raise the political will of the Russian army. The referendums currently under way to justify annexation elicits little international political support and makes the Russian invasion look even more illegitimate. President Putin's threat to use nuclear weapons to defend the "new Russian territories" is unlikely to stop Ukraine from defending its sovereignty and the West from supporting Kyiv. Putin's temptation to throw good money after bad in Ukraine is understandable and reflects human nature; but his effort to salvage something out of his massive miscalculation could only make matters worse for the Russian leader.

THE CHAKDAHA EXPRESS

Jhulan Goswami is an inspirational sportswoman who helped to bring women's cricket in India to the centre stage

THERE'S A LINE in a Rabindra Sangeet which, if loosely translated into English, asks a day-tripper to think about the person who walked through a broken path in the night with a lamp in his/her hand. When Jhulan Goswami started playing the game, women's cricket in India was sleepwalking at night, mired in indifference. Two decades down the line, when India and England cricketers lined up to form a guard of honour in her final game at Lord's on Saturday, the picture looked rosy. There was a time when a former BCCI president didn't react too kindly to a query from a former Indian women's team captain about the roadmap for women's cricket in the country. Come 2023, and the BCCI is set to launch the women's IPL.

Goswami acted as a bridge between the two generations which speaks volumes for her perseverance and longevity. The hard numbers say that the 39-year-old retired as the highest wicket-taker in women's internationals with 355 scalps. But Goswami has always been a lot more than just the numbers in the wickets column. For so long she has been synonymous with women's cricket in India. She was nippy — north of 130kph at her peak — but Goswami's longevity was down to her ability to evolve. She had a terrific inswinger and then worked hard to develop other skill-sets, especially the ball that held its line. It became potent enough to completely outsmart Australia's Meg Lanning at the 2017 World Cup semifinal.

Goswami's story is about a Chakdah girl growing into the game to become a role model for cricket loving girls. For more than a decade she was the flag-bearer of fast bowling in the Indian women's team — Shikha Pandey came later. Not winning a World Cup would remain a void in her glittering career. She played two 50-over World Cup finals and a T20 World Cup final, but the team stumbled at the final hurdle. The Indian women's team would eventually win an ICC event, riding on the Mandhanas and the Harmanpreets. And when they do, they would certainly doff their hats to the likes of Goswami who taught them to dream big. The guard of honour at Lord's attested to unequivocal respect.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



EVER SINCE THE news broke out that five Muslim community members met the RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on August 22, the media has gone to town with various interpretations. The five who met Bhagwat were former Delhi LG, Najeeb Jung, journalist Shahid Siddiqui, hotelier Saeed Shervani, Lt Gen Zameer Uddin Shah and this writer.

I would like to clarify that this was entirely an initiative of the five of us, a motley group of friends with common concerns about the insecurity of the Muslim community and a belief in the process of dialogue. Since the news broke, we have received innumerable messages of support from members of the Muslim community, and even non-Muslims, echoing our feeling that dialogue is the only way forward.

We have also seen many critical comments. Like, who "authorised" us to represent the community. Some expressed concern that "association" with a communal organisation, would jeopardise our so-far untarnished reputation. Some warned us about getting "entrapped". Yet, no one questioned that dialogue is the only way forward.

We have been asked a host of questions which I will deal with through this piece, requested by *The Indian Express*, to set the record straight.

What prompted us to seek this meeting? Well, our pressing concern is about the way things are going, especially the insecurity being increasingly felt by the Muslim community in the wake of recurring incidents of lynching of innocents, calls by Hindutva hotheds for genocide and the marginalisation of the community in almost every sphere.

What was the meeting like? First, we were surprised to see the simplicity of the RSS's chief's modest office. Then, his punctuality — he was on the dot for the 10 am meeting. His patience as well: He listened to all of us with rapt attention for an hour without interrupting even once. The only other person in attendance was Krishan Gopal, his close associate.

Of course, we could sense that Bhagwat was speaking from a position of authority. But it was subtle and his demeanour was never overbearing — there was nothing that would make us uncomfortable. In his opening remarks, he emphasised three things: Hindutva is an inclusive concept in which all communities

have equal room. The country can progress only when all communities are united, he added. In a very significant statement, he emphasised that the Indian Constitution is sacrosanct, and the entire country has to abide by it. He sought to dispel the fear that RSS is seeking to abandon the Constitution at the first opportunity. And, that Muslims will be disenfranchised.

Bhagwat then said that Hindus are extremely sensitive about two things, the first of which is the cow. We responded that Muslims fully understand this, especially as cow slaughter is banned in most of India. The law already punishes violators, as it should. His inference seemed to be that in states where there is no legal ban, Muslims should voluntarily shun beef. This should be easy enough if it ensures security for the community.

The other sensitivity he mentioned was Hindus being called "kafir". Our response was that though the original meaning of this Arabic word was non-believer, if it is considered derogatory, Muslims must avoid it completely. Very easy. Very doable. The Quran mentions that "Allah is rabul alamin," not rabul Muslimeen — God of the universe, not of Muslims alone. The Quran says, "unto you your religion, unto me mine".

We also pointed out to him equally offensive terms used for every Muslim — jihadi and Pakistani. He agreed that it must stop immediately. We suggested the need for a continuing dialogue and asked if he could name some of his associates with whom we could take the interaction forward. He named four persons. He also volunteered to be available himself if required. I used this opportunity to present Bhagwat my book *The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India*, with the prior consent of my colleagues. While doing so, I mentioned four things.

One, though the Muslim population growth is the highest, the rate is highly exaggerated. The difference between the Hindu and Muslim rates, which was 1.1 30 years ago, has come down to 0.3, since Muslims are adopting family planning much faster than the Hindus. Two, contrary to the general perception, Muslims have the least incidence of polygamy as per the government of India's own report and old Census figures. Three, widespread polygamy is just not possible in

India because of the adverse gender ratio. There are only 940 women against 1,000 men, which means 60 men don't even have one wife. Bhagwat had a hearty laugh at this, clearly indicating that the point had registered. Four, Muslims can never overtake the Hindus even in 1,000 years as is clear from a mathematical model which professors of mathematics, Dinesh Singh and Ajay Kumar prepared on my request.

The moment the media got wind of the meeting, it pounced on the news. Reaction? Overwhelmingly positive. Reservation? RSS won't change. Maybe, maybe not. Criticism: We are "legitimising" them. Well, they don't need our legitimising. They are already the largest and most powerful organisation in the world. And who are we anyway? A bunch of retired people who have played successful innings and are concerned about society and the country.

Do we represent the community? Maybe not. Nobody has elected or selected us. But we are also community. We have our perceptions and observations. It was our individual initiative. Are we elitist? Possibly. But nowhere near our accuser, who lives in a palace 10-15 times bigger than our relatively modest houses. We are not illiterate. We are equally aware of the ground realities: Incidents of lynching; calls for genocide; rapes; economic boycott; questioning of voting rights, and discrimination in getting houses or jobs.

Our dilemma: How much to expose to the media? We didn't want to go to them in the first place. But we also did not want to hide from them when approached. After all, we kept the matter from the media for a whole month, while freely talking about it with dozens of friends. That should answer cynics who said we are seeking publicity.

We firmly believe that dialogue is the only way forward. We have nothing to lose, but everything to gain. We want to take our feelings to the honourable Prime Minister as well, at the earliest. We hope he will oblige us with an audience.

Quraishi is the former Chief Election Commissioner of India and the author of An Undocumented Wonder — The Making of the Great Indian Election



JYOTI PUNWANI

AN UNNATURAL QUIET

Criminalising peaceful protest does no credit to the world's largest democracy

MISSION SMART CITIES has a brand new dimension. These cities may soon be protest-mukt. Who wants their fingerprints, handwriting and even DNA samples to be taken, only for marching on the road against injustice? Rules have just been framed for the new Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act 2022 which allows policemen to record the biometrics of those arrested and even merely detained. Those preventively arrested, or charged only for violating Section 144, which prohibits the assembly of five or more persons, are exempt, but only if they have no other offence registered against them.

That's cold comfort. First, the police are no respecter of laws, let alone caveats. Even seven years after Section 66A of the IT Act (concerning "offensive" online posts) was struck down by the Supreme Court, the police continues arresting people under it. Second, seldom are protesters charged only with Section 144 violations. The police's treatment of peaceful protesters depends on their orders and their prejudices. If they are told to teach the protesters a lesson, or they themselves have little tolerance for protesters, their behaviour may well provoke resistance, an offence in itself.

Under the new law, the police can store your biometrics till you are acquitted. But to get them deleted, you need an order from a magistrate. Given the pace at which our legal system works, once you've been acquitted, would you want to return to court?

Currently, images of Iranian women

burning their headscarves on the streets, with men supporting them, are flooding our mobiles. Last week, thousands marched in Paris demanding the president's resignation. In June, thousands of Londoners protested against rising prices. Forget the advanced democracies of the West. In Pakistan, last week, thousands of tribesmen rallied in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for peace and an end to terrorism in the region.

Alas, such images are rare in India, although not for a lack of causes. Food and gas prices are at a record high; all through the rains, our metros were flooded; potholes claim lives every day. Yet, we aren't out protesting. In recent years, one can only think of a few peaceful street protests in which thousands participated: The protests against Dalit scholar Rohith Vemula's suicide in 2016, the kisan long march in Maharashtra in 2018, the anti-CAA/NRC protests across cities in 2019-2020, and the farmers' protests in Delhi in 2020-21.

One reason for the lack of street protests is that the streets are no longer available. Till the 1990s, peaceful morchas would snake their way across main roads. That era ended after the authorities designated one specific area in every city for protests. Rendered invisible, out of sight of the public, with even wall-posters banned, the protesters became out of mind even for the authorities.

A more recent change has been the criminalisation of peaceful protest. Earlier, even if detained, protesters were let off in a couple of

hours, with no charges filed. But the advent of the BJP government at the Centre saw criminal cases filed against peaceful protesters. The progress of these cases reveals that the police have no intention to prosecute; yet, the accused must take every court date seriously.

Taking to the streets to protest peacefully is a fundamental right in a democracy. Our Constitution guarantees it; our Supreme Court has upheld it more than once. For the world's largest democracy to treat peaceful protesters as criminals does it no credit.

Today, the only ones who actually take to the streets are political parties, whose members are willing to court arrest. For others, planning a silent demonstration (not even a morcha) outside the corner designated for such demonstrations involves taking police permission, not a pleasant exercise.

One section though has never faced a problem marching through the streets. Ruling party supporters make up this special class of citizens. The rest of us may as well keep our heads down, choosing to see nothing, feel nothing, like the walking dead described by revolutionary poet Paash: "Sabse khatarnaak hota hai/murda shaanti se bhar jaana/...sab kuch sehan kar jaana/ghar se nikalna kaam par/aur kaam se lautkar ghar aana." (The most dangerous thing is to be filled with the peace of the grave; bear everything; leave home for work and return home from work.)

The writer is a senior journalist

SEPTEMBER 26, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

GAURIGANJ ARRESTS

THE GAURIGANJ SHOOTING incident in which Tikori Singh, a worker of the Sanjay Gandhi Vihar Manch, was injured and later died in a Lucknow hospital, took a dramatic turn with the arrest of three important Manch leaders: Akbar Ahmed, MLA, in Lucknow, Kalpanath Sonkar, MP, in Basti and J N Mishra in Delhi.

US VOTES FOR ISRAEL

THERE WERE ONLY two negative votes — those of Israel and the United States — when the emergency special session of the UN

General Assembly condemned the recent "criminal massacre" of Palestinians in West Beirut and urged the Security Council to conduct an investigation into the circumstances and extent of the massacre. The vote on the resolution by 15 non-aligned nations including India was 147 to two.

MANEKA REACTS

REACTING SHARPLY TO the arrests of three leading members of the Sanjay Vihar Manch, Maneka Gandhi claimed that it was a pure case of "political retaliation". Addressing newsmen, she remarked: "Why is the government reaction so panicky after

my visit to Amethi? I think the reason should be quite obvious." Asked if she feared her arrest, she said, "I don't fear it, I expect it."

AIR STRIKES

STRIKING EMPLOYEES OF Doordarshan and All India Radio called off their day-long agitation 15 minutes before resumption of transmission, following the suspension of five security men for allegedly manhandling P L Gupta, a television assistant engineer. While Suresh Mathur, Director-General, Doordarshan, was announcing the suspensions, the security staff went on agitation demanding withdrawal of the orders.

A recipe for reform

If India is to progress and emerge as a great power, there is no alternative to radical reforms in the police



PRAKASH SINGH

SIXTEEN YEARS AGO, on September 22, 2006, the Supreme Court gave a landmark judgment on police reforms. It raised great expectations. It was generally felt that a new era would begin for the police; that it would become accountable and people-friendly, and that it would give primacy to upholding the rule of law. The police fraternity has since been observing September 22 as Police Reforms Day. There has been some half-hearted compliance with the judicial directions but generally, the states have shown — as Justice Thomas Committee recorded — “indifference to the issue of police reforms”.

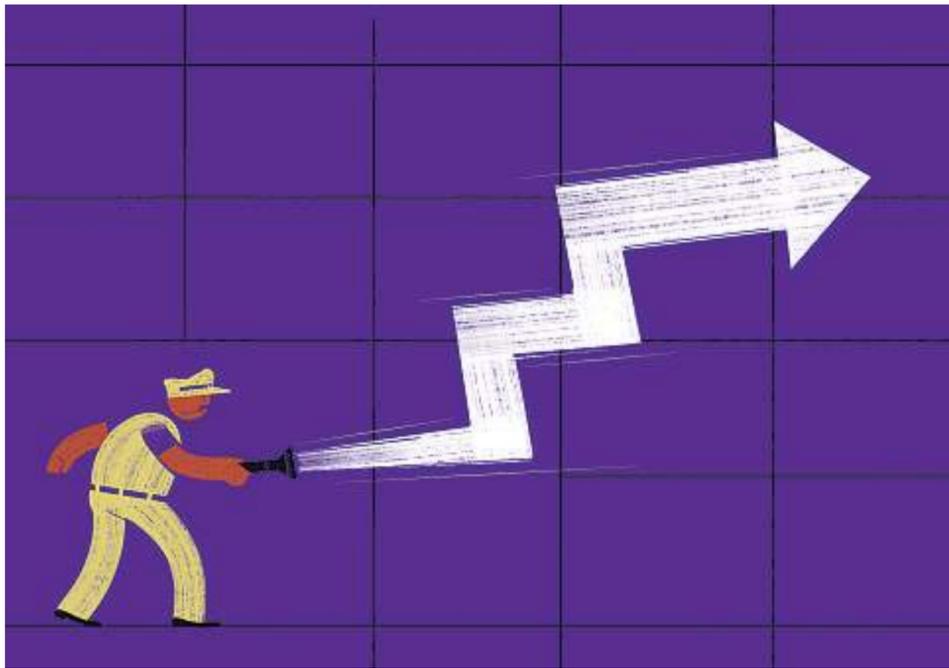
Shall we, therefore, give it up as a lost case in the face of political opposition and administrative stone-walling? The stakes are too high. I would like to give 10 reasons why the country must push for police reforms.

One, the Prime Minister, in his Independence Day speech, gave a clarion call for erasing all the vestiges of colonialism. The Police Act of 1861, which governs substantially the functioning of police even today, is a symbol of colonial rule. It was promulgated to have a police that would be “politically useful” — one which would ensure the dominance of the imperial masters over a subject people. Significantly, the British devised a system of different policing for themselves, where police officers, according to Lord Denning, were “answerable to the law and the law alone”. But, for Indians, they followed the Irish model, which enabled the executive to have complete authority over the police. Unfortunately, the system has not been changed even seven decades after Independence.

Two, we have one of the fastest growing economies in the world. We are proud of it. However, what most people do not realise is that this progress would have been even faster if the country did not have such serious challenges to its internal security, which sapped the economy of the country. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace, violence cost the country 7 per cent of its GDP in 2020. Economic development depends on sound law and order and we can have good law and order only if we have professional police.

Three, we are proud of our democracy. However, it has been vitiated by the infiltration of persons of questionable background. According to the Association of Democratic Reforms, the percentage of such people in Parliament has been showing a steady upward trend. It was 24 per cent in 2004, 30 per cent in 2009, 34 per cent in 2014 and 43 per cent in the last election held in 2019. The trend is disturbing. The police, under the circumstances, feel hamstrung in taking action against this segment of people and their supporters who have a shady background and who may one day devour the very system that has placed them in power.

Four, the police are not able to deal with



C R Sasikumar

the internal security challenges as effectively as they should. Jammu & Kashmir has been witnessing unrest for the last 30 years; the Maoist problem has been festering for more than 50 years and there have been multiple insurgencies in the Northeast for more than 60 years. It is not that these problems cannot be contained. Unfortunately, we have no internal security doctrine with the result that the problems are tackled as per the perception of the ruling dispensation at any given point in time. The state police forces are in shambles and find themselves incapable of tackling these problems decisively.

Five, people, in general, do not have confidence in the police. This is particularly true of the lower strata of society, who feel that there is one law for the poor and another for the rich and powerful. This has to change. And that will only happen if the police are insulated from the influence of those with political or financial clout.

Six, law and order problems are becoming more complex with every passing year. Organised crime has acquired international dimensions. Arms trafficking and drug trafficking do not observe any borders. Cybercrimes are increasing in geometrical progression. These problems require a very high level of sophistication and expertise on the part of the police. They would be able to achieve that only if the politicians stop looking at the police as an instrument to promote their narrow partisan ends.

Seven, the police are not able to deliver partly because of poor infrastructure. There are huge deficiencies in human resources. Overall, there is a vacancy of more than 5,00,000 personnel. These must be filled. There is huge scope for improvement in transport, communications and forensics as well.

Eight, poor housing conditions and long

People, in general, do not have confidence in the police. This is particularly true of the lower strata of society, who feel that there is one law for the poor and another for the rich and powerful. This has to change. And that will only happen if the police are insulated from the influence of those with political or financial clout.

working hours have an adverse impact on police performance. The National Police Commission had recommended 100 per cent family accommodation for all non-gazetted police personnel. The satisfaction level today is hardly 31.24 per cent. According to the Status of Policing in India Report, 2019, an average policeman works for 14 hours a day and does not get any weekly off. This takes a heavy toll on his mental and physical health. We should have 12-hour shifts straightaway and gradually aim to achieve eight-hour shifts.

Nine, there is enormous scope for technological inputs into the functioning of the police. These inputs would act as a force multiplier. The Prime Minister, while addressing senior police officers of the country at Lucknow on November 21, 2021, called for the setting up of a high-powered technology mission to adopt future technologies for fulfilling grassroots policing requirements. This needs to be taken up as a priority.

Ten, police reforms must extend to its different wings at the Centre also. It is very strange that the CBI does not have statutory support and that this powerful organisation, created on the basis of a resolution passed on April 1, 1963, derives power to investigate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946. It is an anomalous arrangement. Another powerful organisation, the Intelligence Bureau, which was set up through an administrative order in 1887, also needs a statutory basis.

The future of India is linked with police reforms. If the country is to progress and emerge as a great power, there is no alternative to radical reforms in the police.

The writer was formerly Director General of Police, UP, DGP Assam and DG BSF

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“The cost for such a brazen breach of the constitution must be high. As many constitutional experts have suggested, President Bidya Devi Bhandari may now have no option but to resign.”

— THE KATHMANDU POST

Rupee will bounce back strongly

The Indian currency has weakened because the dollar has strengthened, not because economic fundamentals have worsened



SOUMYA KANTI GHOSH

THE LATEST INTEREST rate hike by the US Federal Reserve and by the Swiss Central Bank (ending the era of negative interest rates in Europe) demonstrates the new-found resolve of central banks in developed economies to bring inflation under control. The US Fed was late in picking up on the signs of rising inflation, and its non-temporary nature. But adherence to faster and sharper rate hikes might absolve it of the acts of omission for the time being. The Fed dot plot now shows that rates may continue to rise in 2022 and even in 2023, touching 5 per cent. This is a worrying number for global markets.

The fact that major central banks — the European Central Bank, the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan — have lagged the US expectations on the pace of rate hikes has exacerbated the situation, spurring the Dollar index to its 20 years highs, and beyond. This is one of the few times when currencies of developed economies are witnessing more weakness than those of emerging market economies. The Euro, having broken parity, is trading at a two decade low and could well inch towards its all-time low of 0.8231 seen in October 2000. Another major currency, the Yen, is below its low of 1998, prompting the Bank of Japan to intervene in the markets on Thursday for the first time since June 1998 to protect the crucial level of 145. The Pound could see further weakness as a chequered political landscape and adverse climatic conditions push it to its 1985 lows of 1.05 against the dollar. For currencies of emerging market economies, the fall during the turmoil has been less wild, a reversal of the trend observed during the taper tantrum. This “relative” performance by emerging economies like India is often ignored by puritans while assigning an abstract value to the depreciation of currency.

Against this volatile background, the fall of the rupee past 80 against the US dollar was inevitable. Till now the RBI had been protecting the currency from crossing this psychological benchmark and keeping the volatility under control. However, after the recent hike by the US Fed, and the dot plot indicating the possibility of a terminal rate of around 5 per cent, the rupee has depreciated, crossing the 80 mark. No central bank can prevent a currency depreciation at this juncture. In this environment, the RBI might allow the rupee to depreciate, though only for this period. The currency looks still overvalued when weighed against the real effective exchange rate and the nominal effective exchange rate.

Moreover, the RBI has already used foreign exchange reserves of around \$75 billion since the Ukraine war, to support the rupee. This has reduced the import cover to nine months. There is always a trade-off in using the foreign exchange reserves to defend the currency. This stance may have been justified as much of the weakness in the rupee

has been due to a strong dollar and not India's domestic economic fundamentals. The rupee has depreciated by a modest 6.7 per cent vis-à-vis the US dollar since the war broke out while the Dollar index has appreciated by 15 per cent during the same period. This means that the rupee will bounce back strongly once the dust settles — research shows that after a fall, the rupee inevitably stages a strong comeback. This is a fair assumption under the current circumstances, as India's macroeconomic fundamentals are strong enough to warrant a bounce back.

However, the best thing that might have happened to India post the Ukraine war — a harbinger of a new India in the making — has been the robust performance of equities. The resumption of foreign portfolio flows pitches the “uniquely Indian” theme. Thus markets haven't fallen as much when compared to the fall in developed economies. Nor did any panic set in when FPIs were retiring portions of their funds earlier in the year. Though it may be noted that portfolio inflows have revived strongly in August and continued in September with an inflow of \$10 billion — 68 per cent of the outflows during April-July. This “decoupling” is a harbinger of things to come.

The other decoupling that has occurred is that domestic yields at the longer end of the

tenure have been contained, even as global yields have shot through the roof. These developments are new to conventional macroeconomics wisdom.

The decoupling story is however not an outlier. With increased private participation in new investment announcements (around 70 per cent), economic prospects appear to be on track, backed by strong corporate and household balance sheets. The MSME sector, a proxy for the informal economy, has proved naysayers wrong. Recent data captures the resilience of the sector, first in the face of the pandemic and now with slippages nowhere near the levels envisaged some time back. In fact, even the net NPA levels of MSMEs (those against which no provision has been made) are quite within the comfort zone of banks. Collections have improved, and accounts are getting upgraded in possible cases.

We end with an interesting anecdote. There has been a record jump in housing loan disbursements in 2021-22. And that has continued in 2022-23. The demand is coming from tier 3 and tier 4 cities, with a larger preponderance of women among the borrowers. This rising demand for home loans in such cities can be attributed in part to the SVAMITVA scheme that acts as a force multiplier for those residing in rural areas with the right to document their residential properties previously non-existent. This shift in demand towards smaller cities augurs well for creation of better social infrastructure in education/healthcare facilities in future. Growing participation by Digital Sakshis under the aegis of National Rural Livelihoods Mission/State Rural Livelihoods Mission, which has ushered in a marked behavioural shift through rapid financialisation of women, is another enabler. Clearly, there is decoupling here also — a welcome shift from the hitherto male-dominated loan book of financial institutions.

The author is Group Chief Economic Advisor, State Bank of India. Views are personal

Thinking universities

They need more freedom, not management jargon and state control



SUKANTA CHAUDHURI

I READ ROHIT Kansal and Dipankar Sengupta's “Rethinking Universities” (IE, September 20) with a sense of déjà vu: The familiar mix of high principle and managementspeak, the insidious shift of focus from all higher education institutes (HEIs) to public universities, hence the easy branding of the academic as a species of laid-back sarkari babu.

From a lifetime in public universities, I know their iniquities only too well: Shabby campuses, surly public relations, a byzantine bureaucracy. All these merit reform, and fast. Yet the system's intrinsic merits produced an academic diaspora that the world values, a major force behind the global knowledge economy. The credit goes to institutions across India, not IITs alone. (“There are two of us here from Burdwan,” said a fellow of an Oxford college.) As this implies, at least the upper segment of HEIs maintained an international profile. There were no ranking lists then, but we looked the world in the eye and engaged with it intensively.

Till 2003, virtually all Indian HEIs were public institutions. But implementing the Mandal Commission report from 1990 altered the academic demography. The educationally privileged classes used their money power to shift to a more exclusive system. Today, roughly 70 per cent of tertiary students enrol at private HEIs, which run at least notionally on the lines suggested by Kansal and Sengupta. The benefits should have been apparent by now. Instead, why the deepening gloom?

The authors would blame an outdated dystopia: State-funded HEIs with underworked teachers in secure jobs. What teachers? What funds?

In December 2021, 30 per cent of posts in

central universities were vacant. For professors, the figure was 40 per cent. Several states had a worse deficit: 62 per cent in Odisha, where two universities had no teachers at all. At a university in another state, a batch completed their Master's degrees without any full-time faculty. If the matter rested with them, teachers would surely not hesitate to appoint themselves. The tangles form higher up the chain — financial, bureaucratic or judicial.

The system keeps ticking through various levels of academic serfdom: Lifelong “temporary” and “ad hoc” appointees; “casual” and “guest” lecturers, supposedly taking a few classes but saddled with a full-time routine. They are paid fixed sums far below salary scales, with regular breaks in service. Even so, nearly 25 per cent of college posts in Delhi were totally vacant last December. It is likely to be worse elsewhere.

This is not a conducive milieu for creative reform. Without a respectable level of staff and infrastructure, attempts at rigorous management are doomed to fail; or if enforced on an underprivileged workforce, will create stress and resistance that cannot translate into action.

So too with funding. The discontinuation of Five-Year Plans deprived public universities of their staple development grants — which, incidentally, were performance-based. The budget for central universities rose by 6.6 per cent this year — or not at all, adjusting for inflation. State-level HEIs are in peril. Traditionally, the state paid for salaries and maintenance and the Centre for development, chiefly through the UGC. Today, the University Grants Commission is a misnomer: Its funding schemes are largely suspended. The Education Ministry notionally administers the

Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). Universities (including mine) which were granted substantial RUSA funds were left stranded when the money dried up less than halfway through, leaving a trail of abandoned projects, unemployed staff and incomplete buildings.

Even more uncertain is the “Institute of Eminence” (IoE) status — awarded after rigorous assessment of the very kind Kansal and Sengupta advocate. The tag entitles public HEIs to Rs 1,000 crore. Two state-level universities, Anna and Jadavpur, made the grade. Given their grotesquely lower funding they must have worked far harder to match the IITs and IISc; but because of the ministry's inflexible diktats on state government support, the award remains stalled to this day. Clearly, the authorities are guided not by performance but by bureaucratic criteria.

There is another channel for resource-building, though for public universities it can hardly be cited to reduce government support. They can be empowered (as opposed to exhorted) to seek other sources, public and private. This calls for freedom of operation that the Centre and most state governments are vying to take away.

I may elaborate on my own experience. Jadavpur is a small university under a famously insolvent state government. Yet it qualified as an IoE and earlier as a “University with Potential for Excellence”. It is among the meagre handful of Indian HEIs in the first 1,000 in THE and QS rankings. This is because it has always allowed its faculty extraordinary freedom of operation, provided they worked within some broad parameters and sent audited accounts strictly on time. This has ensured hundreds of crores of funding over the

years. The university grew on its own external earnings — from now-defunct schemes of the UGC and various ministries, as well as corporate bodies. A research school to which the university paid a lakh a year regularly garnered a crore.

Faculty members negotiated with funders as with academic partners. We genuinely approached both in the same spirit of enterprise. I once negotiated a major programme with another university and only then informed my own vice-chancellor. Instead of crushing his audacious subordinate, he expressed delight. The result was a Rs 3-crore project.

Today, my brilliant colleagues struggle to keep their projects afloat. Curricula are laid down by the UGC in minute detail. Both the Centre and the state demand endless pounds of procedural flesh — there is no freedom of operation. The licence-permit raj has not fled the land but migrated to academia. Add to this the restrictions on free speech and writing (in the IITs, anything causing “embarrassment” vis-à-vis the government). Only the demented would expect freedom of teaching, research and publication in this degrading milieu. A person cannot queue up with a cap in hand one minute and range the world in one's thoughts the next. You cannot toggle between being a free and a caged animal.

I love Kansal and Sengupta's metaphors of “dismantling silos” and restructuring. I would only ask where in the hierarchy the process should begin, and which way it should run. If the authorities got off academic backs, at least the latter could fitly be blamed for their failures.

The writer is professor emeritus, department of English, Jadavpur University

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HONOURING LEADERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, “Undoing colonial legacy” (IE, September 24). “The first Pradhan of united India”, SC Bose will finally get the respect he's owed. His statue, replacing that of King George V, signifies the erosion of western imperialism in India. Kartavya Path is a novel symbol which does justice to the national movement and the sacrifices made by several leaders whose contributions are immense. Politics aside, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is just fulfilling his duty of honouring the leaders that made India what it is today.

Shaswat Jena, Ghaziabad

A FINE LINE

THIS REFERS TO editorial, “Profit in hate” (IE, September 23). There is a fine line between freedom of speech and hate speech. Television anchors nowadays have converted their debate shows into a platform where hate speech is encouraged just to garner TRPs and appease political bosses. Though the dependency of Indian media on advertisements for survival is a bitter truth, there is simply no excuse to justify the kind of inflammatory comments peddled by these media houses. The need to introspect and course correct is urgent.

Vijaya Taneja, Ghaziabad

PUNISH HATE CRIMES

THIS REFERS TO the report, “Sharp rise in hate crimes in Canada: India advisory to its nationals” (IE, September 24). India and Canada are entering turbulent waters because of the latter's failure to check hate crimes, and the so-called Khalistan referendum. The perpetrators of these xenophobic attacks should be brought to justice immediately. The government of India's strong objection to the “Khalistan referendum” in Canada is the right step in the interest of the country's unity and integrity.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

GIFT TO SCHOLARS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, “The hidden Hemingway” (IE, September 23). Making available a trove of Hemingway memorabilia to the public at the Penn State University is a huge favour to scholars. It has brought cheer to his fans as well as teachers and students of American English literature in India. It will offer the world so much more to study and analyse in his works. The path-breaking style introduced by him was emulated by writers of numerous languages across the globe. These writings require translation in other languages, too. Hopefully, the author's admirers in India get to view the memorabilia in person soon.

Samuil Hassan Quadri, Bikaner

BRIEFLY

KARNATAKA

Ex-CM Krishna in hospital with lung infection

Bengaluru: Former CMSM Krishna is in hospital with an acute respiratory infection. A statement by Manipal Hospital said Krishna is recuperating. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who met Krishna at the hospital, said the former CM was shifted from Yedeshi Hospital to Manipal Hospital at around 2 am on Sunday morning owing to breathing complications. "His breathing has returned to normal," the CM said. Member of the BJP's parliamentary board committee BS Yediyurappa also met Krishna at the hospital on Sunday. **ENS**

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Two infiltrators killed near LoC in Kupwara

Srinagar: Two militants were killed as security forces foiled an infiltration bid near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Machil sector of J&K's Kupwara district on Sunday, police said. Srinagar-based PRO Defence Col Emron Musavi said at around 7:30 am, alert troops observed two armed infiltrators crossing the LoC near Tekri Nar, Machil. **PTI**

PUNJAB

Dental college hostel warden 'dies by suicide'

Ludhiana: An assistant warden of the hostel at Baba Jaswant Singh Dental College and Research Institute of Ludhiana allegedly died by suicide late on Saturday, police said. Police said the body of Veer Singh, 40, was found in the water tank on the college campus. According to Sanjeev Kapoor, SHO at Moti Nagar police station, Singh's wife alleged he was overworked and being harassed by his superiors. Students and staff of the college held a protest and demanded a fair probe into the incident. **ENS**

ASSAM

ULFA(I) militant arrested, arms recovered

Guwahati: A cadre of ULFA (Independent), a banned outfit, was arrested from Charideoe district of Assam and a cache of arms and ammunition was recovered from his possession, an official said on Sunday. Troops of Joypur Battalion of Red Shield Division under the aegis of Spear Corps apprehended the United Liberation Front of Asom (Independent) member from Sonari, said a public relation officer of the defence sector. **PTI**

AFTC trainee's death: Six IAF officers face murder charge

KIRAN PARASHAR
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 25

SIX AIR Force officers have been charged with murder in connection with the death of a former Air Force Technical College (AFTC) trainee. Police in Bengaluru, where the AFTC is based, said no arrests have been made so far and that they are waiting for the post-mortem report.

Former trainee Ankit Kumar Jha, 27, who had been discharged from service over alleged disciplinary issues, was found dead at a hostel room at the AFTC on September 21. A police officer said he left behind a seven-page note that named some IAF officers.

The officers named in the note include an Air Commodore, two Group Captains, and two Wing Commanders, the police officer said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (north), Bengaluru, Vinayak Patil told The Indian Express that an investigation into the death was underway and that no arrests had been made. "We have registered a case under section 302 (murder) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of

common intention)," he added.

The post-mortem report is expected on Monday, a police officer said.

Speaking to The Indian Express, a serving IAF officer from Delhi said the Air Force would come out with an official statement on the matter shortly.

"Official details will be released before the public soon. The case is under investigation," the officer said.

According to a police officer, a court of inquiry had been ordered in connection with the trainee's alleged disciplinary issues, following which he was found guilty and discharged from service. On September 21, which would have been his last day on the AFTC campus, he was found hanging in the hostel room, the police officer added.

After his death, his brother, Aman, filed a complaint against the IAF officers. He also demanded that the CBI take up the case.

"My parents are yet to come out of the shock and will not be able to talk about anything," Aman told The Indian Express, adding that he was also not a state to say anything more.

UP: 2 months after constable found hanging in Banda, six cops booked

Lucknow: An FIR has been lodged against three named and three unidentified police constables in connection with the alleged murder of a 22-year-old constable who was found hanging at his residence, police said.

The police said Raghendra Singh was posted at Banda's Kamasin police station and it was

his first posting. He was found dead on July 29. The police also said no suicide note was recovered from the spot. A case was lodged almost two months later after senior officers intervened.

The three accused — Aman Singh, Vikram Singh and Saurabh Verma — were posted at the same police station. **ENS**

AMIT SHAH SECURITY BREACH

Arrested man posed as security at other events too —including one with PM

SAGAR RAJPUT
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 25

HE WAS recently caught pretending to be a part of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's security, but this was hardly 32-year-old Hemant Pawar's first such escapade.

Pawar, personal secretary to a Member of Parliament from Andhra Pradesh, had similarly posed as a security member in March during the swearing-in of Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, an event where Prime Minister Narendra Modi was also present.

The security breach at Goa — investigators say Pawar never got close to the PM — emerged while police officers were investigating how he managed to enter restricted zones at Shah's event in Mumbai in September.

Police, who arrested Pawar on September 6, found the full schedule of Shah's two-day visit to Mumbai on his smartphone.

Questioned about this, Pawar told them that a person, allegedly a representative of a political party, had given it to him.

It was this person who then told police that Pawar was present at the Goa swearing-in. Pawar allegedly told the political party representative that he was among the security personnel, following which the two had developed an acquaintance. The political party representative had shared Shah's schedule with Pawar.

The Goa ceremony was attended by several VVIPs including Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Chief Ministers of several BJP-ruled states. Police said Pawar similarly attended several other political events. He would wear a Parliament access card to mislead people while attending these events.

Investigating authorities also revealed that Pawar had deleted several WhatsApp chats from September 4 and 5 — this was when the Union Home Minister visited Mumbai.

Lumpy skin disease: Nearly 1 lakh cattle deaths, toll almost double in three weeks

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

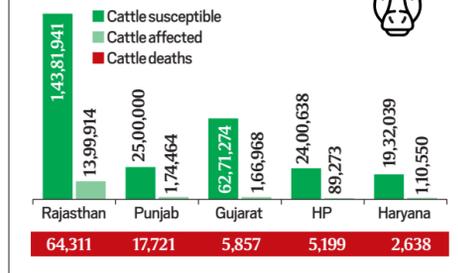
THE CUMULATIVE number of cattle deaths caused by lumpy skin disease has gone up to 97,435 as on September 23 — almost double from the 49,682 deaths recorded about three weeks ago, according to official data.

The data available with the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying shows that the lumpy skin disease has spread across 251 districts in 15 states and affected over 20 lakh animals till September 23.

On August 30, Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Sanjeev Kumar Balyan had told The Indian Express that the disease has affected 11.2 lakh cattle, including 49,682 cattle deaths, in 165 districts across a dozen states and Union Territories.

According to the data, there were 43,759 "epicentres" of the

THE WORST-HIT STATES



disease across 15 states and UTs — Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Goa, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi and Bihar.

The number of cattle "susceptible" to the disease in these states stood at 3.60 crore.

The data shows that the number of cattle "affected" due to the disease stood at 20.56 lakh and out of these, 12.70 lakh animals have "recovered".

Of the 20.56 lakh affected animals, a maximum number of 13.99 lakh cattle have been reported in Rajasthan, followed by Punjab (1.74 lakh) and Gujarat (1.66 lakh).



A Sikh returnee from Afghanistan being greeted at IGI airport in Delhi on Sunday. *Abhinav Saha*

The most deaths caused by lumpy skin disease have also been reported from Rajasthan, where 64,311 animals have died till September 23. This is followed by 17,721 cattle deaths due to the disease in Punjab. The data shows that 1.66 crore cattle have been vaccinated against the disease till September 23.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that there has been a loss of livestock because of the disease across several states and the Centre, along with various state governments, was trying hard to control it. Addressing the inaugural session of IDF World Dairy Summit 2022 in Greater Noida on September 12, the Prime Minister said,

"Our scientists have developed an indigenous vaccine for lumpy skin disease," he said, adding that efforts were also being made to control the disease by expediting testing and restricting the movement of animals. **ENS**

3 missing after flash flood in Himachal

Shimla: Three persons were reported missing following a flash flood triggered by heavy rain in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba Sunday. The State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) received information that a flash flood occurred at around 3 pm in Chamba's Bakani. Roshan Lal, a resident of Khodi, Kanata Devi, and Surinder hailing from Dhareid, went missing. Teams have been formed to trace them.

The state has been witnessing incessant rainfall in the last week causing landslides and other weather-related incidents. As per officials, alerts have been issued for continuous rains in several districts. An 8-foot-long footbridge and a cowshed in the same region were also swept away in the rains.

A separate landslide incident took place in Sirmour at Gangtoli Road blocking vehicular movement. IMD officials said there is a risk of flash floods in Chamba, Kangra, Lahaul-Spiti, Kullu, Shimla, Hamirpur, and Mandi till Monday evening. **ENS**

55 Sikhs, Hindus reach Delhi from Afghanistan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 25

A BATCH of 55 Afghan Sikhs and Hindus, who were stranded in Afghanistan, landed at IGI Airport, Delhi, Sunday.

The 55 people, including 38 adults, 14 children and three infants, were evacuated via a special flight organised by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar and now just 43 of them still remain in Afghanistan.

Puneet Singh Chandhok, president of Indian World Forum, said, "SGPC in coordination with Indian World Forum and GoI is facilitating evacuation of distressed minorities from the Islamic nation. As many as 68 Afghan Hindus and Sikhs have arrived in Delhi after the attack at Gurudwara Kartar Parwan in Kabul. The airfare for the same is being borne by SGPC.

More than 300 have arrived since the Taliban took over Kabul."

Around 43 Hindus and Sikhs still remain in Afghanistan and nine e-visa applications are still pending with GoI. "Four saropos of Sri Guru Granth Sahib still remain in Afghanistan and due to lack of cooperation from local administration in Kabul, these could not be transferred to India as per religious protocol," he said.

Receiving the families at the airport, Vikramjit Singh Sahney, AAP MP in Rajya Sabha and president of World Punjabi Organisation, said that the Ministry of External Affairs has granted them e-visas and repatriation was facilitated by both the governments. "For many families, it was the end of the wait that began on the day the Taliban took over and imposed restrictions, he said. He added that he was in touch with MEA for the evacuation.

PUNE PFI PROTESTS

CM: Those who raised pro-Pak slogans will face sedition charge

Pune Police says can't invoke Sec 124A, cites SC direction

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, PUNE, SEPT 25

AMID THE row over pro-Pakistan slogans being allegedly raised in Pune, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday said a case of sedition will be registered against those who raised the slogans, adding that such acts would not be tolerated in the state.

"Such slogans would not be tolerated in Maharashtra, and the home department will take strict action against those who raised the anti-national slogans. A case of sedition will be registered in this regard," he told reporters in Navi Mumbai during an event to mark the 89th birth anniversary of former MLA and labour union leader Annasaheb Patil.

Pune Police, which is probing into the slogans chanted during a protest held by members of the Popular Front of India (PFI) on Saturday, however, said they



Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnavis at an event to mark Annasaheb Patil's anniversary. *Narendra Vaskar*

would not be invoking sedition charge in the light of a recent Supreme Court direction.

Putting sedition trials on hold, the top court had said in May, "We hope and expect that the state and central governments will refrain from registering any FIR, continuing any investigation or taking any coercive measures by invoking Section 124A of IPC while the aforesaid provision of law is un-

der consideration."

Pune Police Commissioner Amitabh Gupta said they would not invoke sedition charge, and cited the Supreme Court direction. Earlier in the day, he had said that charges under IPC Sections 124A (sedition), 153A (promoting enmity between groups), 153B (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration), 120B (criminal conspiracy), and 109 (abetment) have been invoked.

On Saturday morning, purported videos from Pune district Collectorate were circulated on social media with claims that pro-Pakistan slogans were raised during the protest held against the nationwide crackdown on PFI members. Pune police said video recordings of the rally available on social media will be sent for forensic analysis. DCP (Zone 2) Sagar Patil said, "A case was registered for unlawful assembly and wrongful restraint. Multiple video clips of the incident are being examined."

12,000-YEAR-OLD ARTEFACTS FOUND NEAR CHENNAI

Axes, scrapers, handmade tiles — latest finds in TN excavation

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, SEPTEMBER 25

HAND AXES, scrapers, cleavers and choppers as old as 12,000 years to rouletted ware (from the Sangam era — 2,000 years ago), Roman amphora sherds and glass beads indicating active trade with Rome were some of the artefacts found by the most recent Archeological Survey of India (ASI) excavation near Chennai.

While scholars see it as a crucial chapter in bridging the gap in Tamil history, ASI officials said it was significant as they had discovered some Sangam age artefacts from Natham Medu too, 40 km north west of Chennai city.

K Rajan, a professor at

Puducherry Central University, said the most recent discoveries at Natham Medu are significant for the Mesolithic artefacts found. "We previously discovered significant Mesolithic material at Pattinapakkam, a coastal town south of Chennai. Every stone artefact from stone age reveals a culture before it developed into a civilisation. So, these are significant in weaving the history, bridging the history," Rajan said.

M Kalimuthu, supervising archaeologist of ASI in Chennai, said they have started searching for agencies to send discoveries for carbon dating studies, suggesting that Natham Medu was likely a place where stone tools were produced for hunting. The majority of these stone shards were discovered



75 cm below the surface. In the same area, a 10m by 10m pit had artefacts and rouletted ceramics from the Sangam age, Roman amphora sherds, and glass beads shows ongoing trade with Rome from that period. According to Kalimuthu, the sculptures date from the Pallava era (275 CE) to

the late Pallavas on the surface (897 CE).

The archaeological site at Guruvan Medu, also known as Natham Medu, near Vadakkupattu village, was originally discovered in 1922. There are around 200 potential sites in Tamil Nadu that are used by students



The archaeological site at Natham Medu was originally discovered in 1922; (right) Sangam age artefacts were discovered during the excavation. *Express*

and universities for their small-scale excavations.

"There were multiple factors, including reports and observations from experts, that made us go deeper into the Guruvan Medu

site. The excavation started in July 2022 and we will stop it in a few days only to resume it next year after monsoon," he said.

According to him, the chiselled stone tools indicating the Mesolithic civilization found at a depth of 75 cm were the key findings about a culture. He said they were also surprised to find floor tiles from the area they excavated from the same spot.

One of the major archaeological findings from Tamil Nadu in the recent past were in September 2019, indicating that Keeladi, near Madurai, was an urban settlement of Sangam Age on the banks of River Vaigai. The findings, part of a report, had also pushed the history of literacy in south India to at least 2,600 years ago, reducing the

gap between Sangam era or Tamilagam, and Indus Valley Civilisation (1,500 BCE). Earlier, it was 3rd century BCE.

The state Archaeology Department is now investigating the digs at Mayiladumparai and Keeladi near Madurai, where evidence established the origins of the Tamil Brahmi scripts as 600 BCE, rather than around 300 BCE as previously thought.

While Keeladi's findings proved there were "large scale brick structures and associated artefacts of high economic value" 2600 years ago, Kalimuthu said radiocarbon dating and scientific analysis would be bridging more gaps with regard to Natham Medu findings too.

UP: Class 12 student who shot at principal held

Lucknow: Sitapur police on Sunday said they have arrested a 20-year-old Class XII student who allegedly opened fire at his school principal after he reprimanded him.

The incident happened at Adarsh Ram Swaroop Inter College in the Jahangirabad area of Sitapur district around 7 am on Saturday. The school principal, Ram Singh Verma (48), had received a bullet injury near his hip and is admitted to a hospital. Verma's condition is said to be stable.

According to the police, the Class XII student used a country-made pistol to shoot at his principal. "We have recovered the pistol after he told us where it was hidden. We are trying to find out from where he got it." **ENS**



IN PARIS

FIRE AT 'WORLD'S BIGGEST PRODUCE MARKET'

The market that bills itself as the largest of its kind in the world, is a veritable town unto itself, with more than 12,000 people working there. No one was hurt in the fire, officials said and the fire was brought under control.

TOP OF THE WORLD



A demonstrator cuts his hair in Cyprus on Sunday, during a protest over Mahsa Amini's death. Reuters

HEADCARF DEATH
Iran summons UK envoy over media coverage

IRAN'S FOREIGN Ministry said Sunday it summoned Britain's ambassador to protest what it described as a hostile atmosphere created by London-based Farsi language media outlets. The move comes amid violent unrest in Iran triggered by the death of a young woman in police custody. The state-run IRNA news agency reported the ministry also summoned Norway's ambassador to Iran and strongly protested recent remarks by the president of the Norwegian parliament, Masud Gharahkhani. Iran said it considers the news agencies' reporting to be interference in Iran's internal affairs and acts against its sovereignty. AP

THE KOREAS
Seoul says North test-fired missile into sea

NORTH KOREA fired a short-range ballistic missile Sunday toward its eastern seas, extending a provocative streak in weapons testing as a US aircraft carrier visits South Korea for joint military exercises in response to the North's growing nuclear threat. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile launched from the western inland town of Taechon flew 600 kilometres cross-country before landing in waters off North Korea's eastern coast. The US Indo-Pacific Command said the launch did not pose an "immediate threat to US personnel or territory, or to our allies," but still highlighted the destabilising impact of North Korea's illicit nuclear weapons and missile programs. AP

CANADA
Troops to help in Fiona aftermath

CANADIAN TROOPS are being sent to assist the recovery from the devastation of storm Fiona, which swept away houses, stripped off roofs and knocked out power across the country's Atlantic provinces. Defence Minister Anita Anand said on Saturday that troops would help remove fallen trees and other debris, restore transportation links and do whatever else is required for as long as it takes. She didn't specify how many troops would be deployed. AP

SPAIN
PM Sanchez Covid positive

PM PEDRO Sánchez said on Sunday he has tested positive for Covid. Sánchez did not say whether he was feeling ill or whether he would cancel other engagements next week. "I will keep working, taking all precautions," he said. Sánchez last week attended the United Nations General Assembly in New York. He returned to Spain for an official event Friday. AP

COUNTRY LIKELY TO ELECT MOST RIGHT-WING GOVT SINCE WWII

Meloni tipped to be PM as Italy votes

CRISPIAN BALMER & KEITH WEIR
ROME, SEPTEMBER 25

ITALIANS WERE voting on Sunday in an election that is forecast to return the country's most right-wing government since World War Two and pave the way for Giorgia Meloni to become its first woman prime minister.

A right-wing alliance led by Meloni's Brothers of Italy party appeared set for a clear victory when the last opinion polls were published two weeks ago.

But with a polls blackout in force in the two weeks before the election, there is still scope for a surprise.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0500 GMT) and voting will continue until 11 p.m. (2100 GMT) when exit polls will be published.

However, the complex calculations required by a hybrid proportional/first-past-the-post electoral law mean it may be many hours before the composition of a new slimmed-down parliament is known.

"Long live democracy," said Matteo Salvini, leader of the League party, one of Meloni's main allies, as he voted in Milan



Former Italy PM M Silvio Berlusconi and Forza Italia leader Marta Fascina at a polling station in Milan on Sunday. Reuters

on Sunday morning.

Meloni would be the obvious candidate for prime minister as leader of an alliance that also features former premier Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia.

Berlusconi, 85, also voted in Milan, wearing one of his typical double-breasted suits. Meloni was expected to vote in her home city of Rome later in the day.

A resident of Rome said he was hoping the right would win. "The left, from what I hear, has no serious manifesto and the parties are

on their own, whereas the right at least has a coalition," said the voter, who gave his name as Paolo.

Turnout was around 19% at noon local time, according to provisional data, broadly in line with the 2018 national election. There had been speculation that a large number of Italians would opt not to vote after a low-key summer campaign.

Even if there is a clear cut result, the next government is unlikely to take office before late October. REUTERS

Hello, kids: politicians woo voters on TikTok

GAIA PIANIGIANI
SEPTEMBER 25

ITALIAN POLITICIANS are on a virtual hunt for undecided voters.

Over the summer, as polls suggested that most of those who had not yet picked a side were under 30, party elders took it to the next level: TikTok.

This month, Silvio Berlusconi, 85, who served four times as Italy's PM, landed on the social media platform that is mostly popular among the young, explaining why he was there at his age. "On this platform, you guys are over five million, and 60 per cent of you are less than 30. I am a little envious," Berlusconi said.

The video had 9.6 million views, raising eyebrows among some users. "You send the message that we, young people, are so malleable and bonkers," said Emma Galeotti, a young TikTok content creator.

But Berlusconi's communications team did not give up. His



Giorgia Meloni. NYT

profile is brimming with a mix of snapshots from his TV appearances and classic Berlusconi jokes, as well as political messages recorded in his studio.

"The rebound was comic or grotesque, but being on TikTok allowed him to be central to the electoral debate," said Annalisa Ferretti of advocacy group FB & Associati.

Giorgia Meloni, however, does not seem to be doing as well on TikTok, despite her successful electoral campaign.

Despite the efforts, abstention still seems to be the main threat to the parties.

"They used to say, 'Squares are full and the ballot boxes are empty,'" Ferretti said. "Now it's more social media is full, and the ballot boxes are empty." NYT

25 MISSING, TOLL EXPECTED TO RISE

24 dead as boat with temple devotees capsizes in Bangladesh

ANISUR RAHMAN
DHAKA, SEPTEMBER 25

AT LEAST 24 people, mostly children and women, were killed on Sunday after a boat carrying Hindu devotees to a centuries-old temple capsized in a river in northwestern Bangladesh, officials said.

The death toll is expected to rise further as at least 25 others are missing after the incident in Panchagarh district. The devotees were heading towards the Bodeshwari Temple on the occasion of Mahalaya, the start of the Durga Puja festival, when the boat capsized in the Korotoa River.

"Around 24 people, including 8 children and 12 women have died in the incident so far. Some of them were declared dead after they were brought to a local hospital," Solaiman Ali, administrative chief of Panchagarh's Boda sub-district, told reporters.

He said searches by firefighters and local divers were underway for the missing ones, adding the number of passengers was as-

sumed to be between 70 and 80. Some survivors, who managed to swim ashore, are involved in the rescue operations.

Ali said the engine-run boat was carrying Hindu devotees to the centuries-old Bodeshwari Temple. Panchagarh's administrative chief or deputy commissioner Zahurul Haque said the boat was apparently carrying passengers beyond its capacity.

Thousands of Hindus in the Muslim-majority Bangladesh visit the Bodeshwari Temple every year during the Durga Puja, which began in Bangladesh on Sunday.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have expressed condolences to the victims' families in separate statements.

The Durga Puja is the biggest Hindu festival in Bangladesh.

Hundreds of people die each year in boat and ferry accidents in Bangladesh, largely due to overcrowding. Twenty-six people died in May after an overcrowded speed boat collided with a sand-laden bulk carrier and sank on the Padma River. PTI

PAKISTAN AUDIO LEAKS

Shehbaz govt wants to resume trade ties with India: Imran

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PESHAWAR, SEPTEMBER 25

PAKISTAN'S FORMER PM Imran Khan said on Sunday that his government had snapped trade ties with India after New Delhi revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 and claimed that the Shehbaz Sharif-led government wanted to resume it.

Addressing a rally in Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 69-year-old Khan also said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Vice President Maryam Nawaz was "incapable of telling the truth" as he once again accused her of keeping nepotism above national interests.

"Maryam wants to import power plant machinery from India for her son-in-law," he said, while referring to an audio leak in which Prime Minister Sharif is allegedly being told that Maryam's son-in-law wants to import a power plant from India.

Khan said the present "imported rulers" wanted to resume trade relations with India at the cost of Pakistan's integrity and solidarity.

In recent weeks, several business chambers have urged the government to import essential items like onion and tomato from India for the sake of consumers in the wake of soaring prices of the vegetables following the devastating floods in the country. Relations between India and Pakistan have often been strained over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism.

However, the ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking J&K's special status and bifurcating it into two UTs on August 5, 2019.

India's decision evoked strong reactions from Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties and expelled the Indian envoy. Trade ties have largely been frozen since then.

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW'S MURDER

Pakistan journalist held for 'aiding son' in crime

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, SEPTEMBER 25

PAKISTANI POLICE arrested a veteran journalist for his alleged involvement in his son's beating death of his new wife at their suburban home, police said Sunday.

Police officer Mohammad Faizan said Ayaz Amir, a well-known columnist and TV political analyst in Pakistan, appeared in court in the capital of Islamabad on Sunday accused of aiding his son.

Police were to interrogate him for his role in the death of Sara Inam, 37, who married Amir's son Shah Nawaz four months ago.



Senior journalist Ayaz Amir

Inam was allegedly killed Friday by Shah Nawaz at the couple's home after a row over a family issue. Shah Nawaz was arrested and police say he confessed to hitting his wife repeatedly with a dumbbell and then later tried to hide her body in a bathtub.

Pakistan has a bad track record regarding freedom of expression and several journalists have been assaulted and detained by police in recent months.



TRIP TO ASIA

United States Vice-President Kamala Harris leaves for a trip to Japan and South Korea from Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, on Sunday. AP

ANTI-MOBILISATION PROTESTS IN DAGESTAN

With many fleeing Russia call-up, EU split: To welcome or turn them away

JONG GAMBRELL & ADAM SCHRECK
KYIV, SEPTEMBER 25

RUSSIA'S RUSH to mobilise hundreds of thousands of recruits to staunch stinging losses in Ukraine is a tacit acknowledgement that its "army is not able to fight," Ukraine's president said Sunday, as splits sharpened in Europe over whether to welcome or turn away Russians fleeing the call-up.

Speaking to US broadcaster CBS, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy portrayed the Russian mobilisation — its first such call-up since World War II — as a signal of weakness, not strength, saying: "They admitted that their army is not able to fight with Ukraine anymore."

Although the European Union is now largely off limits to most Russians, with direct flights stopped and its land borders increasingly closed to them, an exodus of Russian men fleeing military service is creating divisions among European officials over



Zelenskyy has portrayed Moscow's call-up as signal of weakness. Reuters

whether they should be granted safe haven.

The partial mobilisation is also triggering protests in Russia, with new anti-war demonstrations on Sunday, including in Dagestan, one of Russia's poorer regions in the North Caucasus.

At least 2,000 people have been arrested in recent days for similar demonstrations around Russia. Many of those taken away have immediately received a call-up summons.

German officials have voiced a desire to help Russian men deserting military service and have called

for a European-wide solution. Germany has held out the possibility of granting asylum to deserters and those refusing the draft.

In France, senators are arguing that Europe has a duty to help and warned that not granting refuge to fleeing Russians could play into Putin's hands.

"Closing our frontiers would fit neither with our values nor our interests," a group of more than 40 French senators said. Turning away fleeing Russians would be "a mistake by Europe in the war of communication and influence that is playing out."

Yet others are adamant that asylum shouldn't be offered. Lithuania foreign minister, Gabrielius Landsbergis, tweeted: "Russians should stay and fight. Against Putin."

His counterpart in Latvia said the exodus poses "considerable security risks" for the 27-nation bloc and that those fleeing now can't be considered conscientious objectors since they did not act when Russia invaded Ukraine in February. AP

ABE FUNERAL TOMMOROW

Maximum security as Japan leaves nothing to chance

Event under spotlight as Tokyo seeks to avoid security blunders exposed in the ex-PM's killing



1,000+

Japanese military personnel deployed for the ceremony with 4,300 guests expected.

TENS OF THOUSANDS of police officers deployed to boost security. Officers and sniffer dogs have been ramping up anti-terrorism patrols at major rail stations and Tokyo's Haneda Airport in recent days.

ROADS AROUND the venue closed, airspace restricted within 46 km of the site from Monday to Wednesday.

MEMBERS OF public will lay flowers at designated

VIPs INCLUDE

- Narendra Modi, Indian PM
- Kamala Harris, US Vice President
- Anthony Albanese, Australia PM
- Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore PM
- Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Vietnamese President
- Charles Michel, European Council President

stands. Their baggage will be inspected and they may be required to go through metal detectors.

700 FOREIGN dignitaries flying in, including around 50 current or former leaders.

EVENT CRITICISED

\$11.5 mn

govt spending on the funeral

\$5.5 mn

of that is for security

\$5 mn

for hosting foreign guests

THE HIGH COST has partly fuelled a public backlash against the taxpayer-funded funeral at a time of economic hardship for many

Source: Reuters

WRITTEN IN 1946, SONGS REVIVED FOR RESISTANCE AGAINST SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN COUNCIL

In S Africa, efforts to preserve Urdu's little-known role against apartheid

FAKIR HASSEN
JOHANNESBURG, SEPT 25

WHILE THE role of Urdu in India's freedom struggle is uncontested, not many people know that Urdu poetry also played a significant part in fuelling anti-apartheid campaigns in South Africa.

In a bid to celebrate the role that Urdu poetry played in South Africa's freedom struggle, a special event was held here on Sunday. Organised jointly by

the Saloojee family, which was involved in the struggle for four generations, and the 'Buzme Adab of Benoni', an organisation that promotes Urdu, the event featured recitals by a number of local and international poets.

"Urdu was born in India, but it doesn't belong only to the Indians. It is the official language of Pakistan, and doesn't belong to the Pakistanis only either," said Shireen Saloojee, one of the organisers.

"In South African anti-apartheid campaigns, the voice

of Urdu poetry was always present on the agenda and we are celebrating this today," she said.

Saloojee explained how the patriotic song "par na jhanda yeh neeche jhukana" (never lower the flag), which is believed to have been an anthem among the freedom fighters in India in the 1920s, had already achieved cult status during meetings of the Indian Congress movement in South Africa.

"During the freedom struggle in South Africa, this song was on every patriot's lips and

became the revolutionary anthem that inspired many people to heroic deeds," Saloojee said.

Researcher Rashid Seedat said he and others were working on a project to preserve the legacy of some of the South African Urdu poets.

"In the anti-apartheid campaigns led by the late Dr Yusuf Dadoo, particularly in the resistance campaign of 1946, one of the biggest campaigns within the Indian community after Mahatma Gandhi left South

Africa, a number of Urdu poets gathered to write these poems," he said.

"In 1981, during the resistance actions against the South African Indian Council, a puppet body of the apartheid government, the song was revived and found new life among a new generation of activists like myself," he added.

Seedat said it was very difficult to do justice by translating the poems into English, so the project went dormant for a while until it was restarted

this year.

Two teams are now researching the history of Urdu poetry in South Africa. One will come out with a book and the other is exploring the idea of a documentary film. Rokaya Saloojee, 89, who became popular for singing patriotic songs in Urdu at rallies, received a special citation at the event.

She came to South Africa from India in 1949 as a young bride and because of her new family's involvement in anti-apartheid resistance, soon be-

came a composer and reciter of Urdu freedom songs.

"She became the most consistent in recording the struggle history of our country through her poetry. From the Defiance Campaign, the Rivonia Trial (that sent Nelson Mandela and others to prison for decades) and up to Mandela's ascent to the Presidency after his release, these were all things that she was writing about in a very prolific and profound way," Seedat said. PTI



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Star rating for packaged foods: why, and how it might work

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

INDIA'S TOP food regulator has published a draft notification that makes it mandatory for pre-packaged foods to carry a star rating similar to the energy-efficiency ratings on electronic goods — to discourage the consumption of foods high in sugar, salt, and fats.

The decision to introduce a front-of-pack label of nutrients in packaged food comes in the backdrop of the increasing incidence of non-communicable diseases.

Front-of-pack label

This is supposed to be a chart or symbol that conveys simplified nutritional information

to consumers, helping them make quick decisions on which foods to buy. The aim is to aid consumers in making an informed choice, even if they buy high-calorie foods.

Experts say that such labelling can help reduce the consumption of ultra-processed foods that are high in sugars, salts, and fats. A position paper by organisations such as Public Health Foundation of India, Centre for Science and Environment, and Indian Academy of Paediatrics earlier this year found Chile had witnessed a 24% fall in the consumption of sugary drinks once the warning label was put.

"Although it is mandatory for food packages to carry the nutrition content, it is printed in very small type at the back of the pack, and most people do not read it. A front-of-pack label is less likely to be ignored," Dr Jugal Kishore,

Head of the Department of Community Medicine at Safdarjung Hospital, said.

Preventing or reducing consumption of foods high in salts, sugars, and fats could help check the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases, to which around 60% of deaths in India are currently attributable.

"Parents will be less likely to give their children instant noodles or chips if they see a red warning label on the pack. Childhood obesity leads to early onset of diabetes, hypertension, and heart attacks," Dr Suneela Garg, Professor of Community Medicine at Maulana Azad Medical College and advisor to FOPIL groups at AIIMS and the National Academy of Medical Sciences, said.

Types of labels

Some ways in which nutritional information can be provided on the front of the pack:

Daily Intake Guide: A panel that says what proportion of the daily recommendations of nutrients is present in one serving of the pre-packaged food.

Nutrition Information Panel: Which provides the quantity of each of the main nutrients present in the food.

Traffic Light Labelling: Which shows the amount of fats, salt, sugar, etc. present in a serving, and classifies it with colours like red, orange, or green based on how healthy it is.

Warning Label: A colour-coded or written label that shows whether the quantity of salts, sugars and fats is high, without providing any details of the quantities in the food.

Star rating: A label that provides 1 to 5

stars based on how healthy the product is, with 5 being the healthiest. It doesn't provide a break-up of nutrients.

FSSAI recommendation

In its draft notification, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has proposed a star rating system called the 'Indian Nutrition Rating (INR)' where the unhealthiest foods will carry a 0 star rating and the healthiest a 5-star rating.

The notification says items will be given scores based on the contribution of energy and content of saturated fats; sugars; sodium; fruits & vegetables (FV); nuts, legumes, and millets (NLM); dietary fibre; and protein in 100 g of solid or 100 ml of liquid foods.

Solid foods with a score of more than 25

will be given 0.5 stars while those with a score less than (-) 11 will get 5 stars. Liquid foods with a score of more than 20 will get 0.5 stars; those scoring zero will get 5 stars, the notification said.

What experts say

Several experts have said that a coloured warning label is likely to work the best in India, where many can't read.

"We need a type of label that can immediately tell people that a food is unhealthy even without reading anything. A traffic light for the various components can achieve that. People will try to go for products that have more green labels," Dr Garg said.

LONGER VERSION

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Giorgia Meloni delivers her address during a party rally in Naples this week. AP

EVERYDAY GLOBAL

MEET GIORGIA MELONI, WHO MAY LEAD ITALY'S FIRST FAR-RIGHT GOVT SINCE THE END OF SECOND WORLD WAR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

ITALY ON Sunday voted in what could be a historic election — according to pre-poll trends, the country could elect its first far right government since World War II, and its first woman prime minister.

Giorgia Meloni's *Fratelli d'Italia* (Brothers of Italy) seems set to capture around 25 per cent of the vote — getting Meloni the top job 100 years after the Fascist leader Benito Mussolini stormed Rome.

Who is Meloni?

Giorgia Meloni's appeal shares commonalities with right-wing leaders in other countries — working class origins, "honest" image, championing of the traditional family setup, a hard line on immigrants, and denouncing "wokeness". While she insists she is not Fascist, her party's roots, and statements by her and her colleagues, have left many concerned.

The 45-year-old Meloni grew up in Garbatella, a working class neighbourhood of Rome, after her father left the family. In her teens, she joined the Italian Social Movement (MSI), created by Mussolini's supporters in 1946. She continued to work with right-wing organisations as she climbed up the political ladder.

In 2006, Meloni was elected to Italy's Chamber of Deputies. In 2008, she became

Italy's youngest minister, in Silvio Berlusconi's government. In 2012, she formed Brothers of Italy, borrowing its symbol — a flame in colours of the Italian tricolour — from MSI, believed to stand for the flame burning atop Mussolini's tomb.

If Brothers of Italy comes to power, it will do so in coalition with Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* and Matteo Salvini's League. What gives Meloni the edge over her more seasoned allies is that hers was the only party last year to not join a broad coalition under technocrat Mario Draghi, which collapsed under its contradictions in July, necessitating the election. Brothers of Italy, thus, can attack the previous government as the only Opposition.

Meloni's programme, policies

Broadly, she favours a business-friendly dispensation that will give tax cuts to all and not just the poor, she wants to boost Italy's flagging birth rate, impose a naval blockade to stop immigrants, and limit the European Union's role in Italy's affairs.

In the Russia-Ukraine war, she has backed Ukraine.

Women's rights, including abortion and proportional representation, LGBTQI rights, and the rights of minorities are likely to suffer. At a rally in June, Meloni said, "Yes to natural families, no to the LGBT lobby, yes to sexual identity, no to gender ideology... no to the violence of Islam, yes to safer borders, no to mass immigration..." Reuters reported.



HARISH DAMODARAN

WHEN, IN May 2016, India adopted inflation targeting as a policy goal enshrined in law, it also embraced the idea of central bank "independence with accountability". Under the new statutory framework, the central government would, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), set an inflation target based on the consumer price index (CPI) once every five years. The RBI was entrusted with the responsibility of meeting this target ("accountability"), for which it would be given "independence" in the conduct of monetary policy.

But in the situation that the economy today is in, the RBI is struggling to be accountable and, at the same time, having to increasingly depend on the government for fulfilling its mandate.

Failure of accountability

Take accountability, to begin with. The Centre, under section 45ZA of the RBI Act, 1934, has fixed the CPI inflation target at 4% with an "upper tolerance limit" of 6%. However, actual year-on-year inflation in 2022 has ruled above 6% every single month from January to August. If it does so in September as well, the RBI, under section 45ZN of the same law, will have to submit a report to the Centre on "the reasons for failure to achieve the inflation target" and "remedial actions proposed to be taken by the Bank". In this case, "failure" is defined as inflation being more than the upper tolerance level of the target "for any three consecutive quarters".

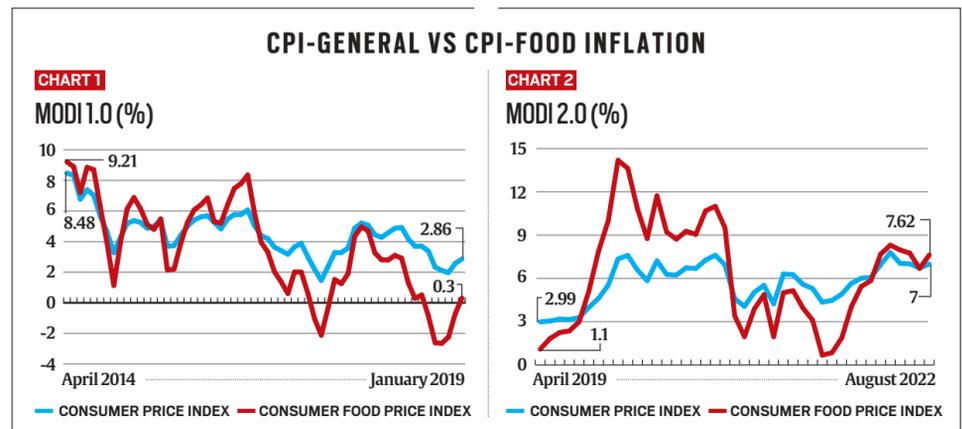
Accountability has been a relatively new problem though. During the Narendra Modi government's first term, roughly from April 2014 to March 2019 (Modi 1.0), CPI inflation was above 6% only in 6 out of 60 months. Moreover, 5 of those 6 months were in 2014, well before the RBI Act was amended to provide a statutory basis for inflation targeting.

Overshooting of the inflation target has been more during the Modi government's second term (Modi 2.0). In the 41 months from April 2019, inflation has exceeded 6% in as many as 21. In other words, a failure rate of over 50%, as against 10% during Modi 1.0.

EXPLAINED ECONOMY

Limits of free monetary policy

Food and beverage items have a combined 45.86% weight in the overall CPI. The RBI is supposed to be accountable, but it can't win the inflation battle without the government — whether it likes it or not



Also, average CPI inflation was 4.5% during Modi 1.0, whereas it has been 5.7% so far in Modi 2.0.

Reason for this situation

There's a simple reason for the RBI's "failure" to adhere to its inflation-targeting mandate. It has to do with food and beverage items, which have a combined 45.86% weight in the overall CPI. The accompanying charts show year-on-year increases in the general CPI as well as the consumer food price index (CFPI), both during Modi 1.0 and Modi 2.0.

During Modi 1.0, food inflation was lower than general inflation in 38 out of 60 months, with the former averaging just 3.5%. Thus, while inflation overall was benign (average of 4.5%), food inflation was even more so. It has been quite the other way round during Modi 2.0, with average CFPI inflation, at 6.3%, more than the 5.7% for general inflation. Also, food inflation has been lower than CPI inflation in only 21 out of 41 months. While CPI inflation has risen and overshoot the 6% target, especially in recent months, the acceleration has been all the more for food inflation since late-2021. The latter has also tended to exhibit greater volatility during Modi 2.0, which is clear from the charts.

Simply put, both the "success" of inflation targeting in Modi 1.0 and "failure" in Modi 2.0 has been largely courtesy of food prices.

Monetary dependence

That links up to the second issue of monetary policy independence — which basically refers to the central bank being insulated

from government interference or electoral pressure in setting its interest rates with a view to achieving low and stable inflation.

But therein lies the irony: The preponderant weight of food items in the Indian consumption basket and hence its CPI — in contrast to developed countries where their shares are hardly 10-25% — makes inflation that much less amenable to control through repo interest rate or cash reserve ratio hikes. The RBI, then, is forced to rely more on government action to meet inflation targets. Far from acting independently — using monetary policy tools that seek to curb demand by raising borrowing costs for firms and consumers — it has to depend on "supply-side" measures by the government. That translates into monetary dependence, not independence.

To get an idea of the government's supply-side actions that have made the RBI's job easier, consider the following:

In the last one year, the effective import duty on crude and refined palm oil has come down from 30.25% and 41.25% to 5.5% and 13.75%, respectively. It's been even sharper — from 30.25% to nil — for crude soyabean and sunflower oil.

On May 13, this year, the Modi government banned exports of wheat. This was extended to wheat flour — including *atta*, *maida* and *rava/sooji* (semolina) — on August 27.

On September 8, exports of broken rice were prohibited. Besides, a 20% duty was imposed on shipments of all other non-par-boiled non-basmati rice.

On May 24, sugar exports were moved from the "free" to "restricted" category.

Further, total exports for the 2021-22 sugar year (October-September) were capped at 10 million tonnes, which was raised to 11.2 million tonnes on August 1. The export quota for the next sugar year is yet to be announced.

On August 12, the Centre directed states and union territories to force pulses traders/millers to declare their stocks of *tur* (pigeon-pea) and upload this information on a weekly basis.

Implications of the policy

The framework of inflation targeting and central bank "independence with accountability" worked well during Modi 1.0. That period was characterised by benign food (and fuel) prices, both domestic and globally. The RBI could, therefore, act in almost splendid isolation and pursue its goal of price stability without being constrained by government intervention or even fiscal policy.

Things have been different in Modi 2.0. The last two years or less have seen a resurgence of inflation, driven mainly by supply-side factors — from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine to extreme weather events. The last includes excess rain during September-January 2021-22, the heat wave in March-April, and the deficient monsoon in the Gangetic plain states this time.

These — along with skyrocketing prices of fuel, which have a 6.84% weight in the CPI, over and above the 45.86% of food — have rendered the RBI's demand-side toolkit to fight inflation ineffective.

Wanting to be left alone is one thing. But this is a battle the central bank cannot win without the government.

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Question at heart of Pak political turmoil: Who appoints next army chief?

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN
CHENNAI, SEPTEMBER 25

OVER THE past several weeks, even as it has counted its devastating losses in nationwide floods, Pakistan has been focussed on something else: the selection of its new army chief. General Qamar Javed Bajwa retires on November 29 — and there is intense speculation over whether he would step down or get an extension, and who might replace him.

Imran's ambitions

Some of this is because of the nature of the Pakistan Army. Through most of the last 75 years, it has seen itself as superior to all other organs of the state, and used its self-assigned job description as "defender of Pakistan's ideological boundaries" to intervene in politics several times — directly through coups, and indirectly by bringing in a political party or leader of its choice, or by meddling in the work of a government it did not like.

But the reason why the succession issue is more contentious than it has been in recent memory is because of former Prime

Minister Imran Khan's newly complicated relationship with the army. Imran owes his stint as PM in good measure to Bajwa and former ISI chief Lt Gen Faiz Hameed. But as the incompetence of his government became evident, and the army began to distance itself from the horse it had backed, Imran bet on Hameed as Bajwa's successor, so that Hameed might return the favour by ensuring another term for Imran. This led to a standoff between Imran and Bajwa last October, when the army chief decided to replace Hameed as head of the ISI. For weeks, Imran refused to sign off on Bajwa's choice to succeed Hameed, as Pakistani PMs have customarily done.

Imran blinked eventually. But his days in office were numbered thereafter. The opposition parties were galvanised by the daylight they saw between him and the army chief. His ouster became necessary before he got the opportunity to appoint a chief of his choice, who would then work to win him another term. A no-confidence vote was set up. With the Bajwa-Khan honeymoon over, the army said it would remain "neutral" — and made no effort to shore up the numbers on his side. Imran lost, the first time a Pakistani PM had been ousted

through a parliamentary procedure. Imran's tirade against the army and the Shehbaz Sharif government only became louder thereafter.

In the months since then, Imran has been trying hard to divide the army. Claiming most officers and ranks were on his side, he has railed against the top leadership of the military, painting it as having engineered his unseating as part of an American conspiracy to bring in an "imported government", and exhorting all "patriots" not to side with "evil".

Response of Govt

Imran's "western conspiracy" cry has mined the anti-American vein running through the conservative new middle class of Pakistan, including in the army, which sees itself as a true middle-class institution. Pumped by the popular support he has managed to rally since his ouster, Imran has been demanding early elections. Adding to the mood in his favour are the unpopular economic decisions that the Sharif government has had to take. The floods will only increase Pakistan's economic woes that the recently granted IMF

package — it was negotiated before the disaster struck — may not be able to mitigate. The government's actions — filing terrorism charges against Imran for remarks against government officials at a rally, jailing journalists, taking TV channels off air for being "pro-Imran", and prohibiting them from airing his interviews — seem to have only added to the former PM's popularity.

Sharif's camp believes it is more politic to stay on till the end of the government's term next May, by which time the government may manage an economic turnaround of sorts and recoup lost ground. Or that Imran, who faces questions about campaign funding and misappropriation of official gifts worth millions, may be disqualified from elections.

The PTI-controlled Punjab assembly resolution that Sharif should be tried for treason for consulting his brother Nawaz who lives in self exile in London on the next army chief is of a piece with the cat and mouse game between the two sides.

View from PTI corner

It was Imran's aim to be in a position to

appoint the next army chief. If earlier it was to win the next elections, now it is to have the army on his side after his comeback, of which he is convinced. This is why he suddenly wants Bajwa, rendered a lame duck by the smear campaign against him, to continue so it will not be an army chief of Sharif's choice that he would be dealing with. Preemptively, he has insinuated that any successor appointed by Sharif would not be patriotic.

"They want to bring their own army chief...they are afraid that if a strong and patriotic army chief is appointed then he would ask them about the looted wealth," Imran said in a recent rally, repeating his allegation that all those in the ruling combine were "thieves".

In a media interview, he said generously that Bajwa could be given an extension, and the succession question in the army should be left to the next government to settle.

However, it does seem that unless elections are held by the end of this year and Imran wins, his favourite would be out of the running. Lt Gen Hameed, recently transferred to Bahawalpur from Peshawar Corps where he had been posted last October, retires in April 2023. Those said to be top of

the list are Lt Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Lt Gen Mohammed Amir, and Lt Gen Azhar Abbas. Bajwa and Hameed are still not being counted out entirely.

Imran's attacks against the army should have gladdened the hearts of progressive elements in Pakistan who have been demanding a rollback of the army's influence in national politics for years. After all, here is a leader who is trying to tame the powerful military. But it is quite evident that Imran's is not a democratic or principled opposition to the military's meddling in politics, but is born out of political expediency, the frustration at having been pushed off the "same page".

Irrespective, he has already weakened the Pakistan Army as an institution, showing it up to be a divided house and for the first time (barring the last two years of Gen Musharraf's term in office), out of sync with its chief, something no civilian politician has managed before.

The Indian security establishment may see this as a good augury for the long term, but it should also be alive to the possibility that the fallout, including an institutional response by the Pakistan military to Imran's challenge, might drag in the region.

17 IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

BC NAGESH

KARNATAKA MINISTER OF SCHOOL EDUCATION, LITERACY AND SAKALA

‘The uniform system in colleges was not started by the BJP. No girl left because of the *hijab* issue’

Karnataka Minister of School Education, Literacy and Sakala BC Nagesh talks about controlling the learning loss in schools, the *hijab* row and textbook revision. This session was moderated by SANATH PRASAD, Senior Sub-Editor, *The Indian Express*

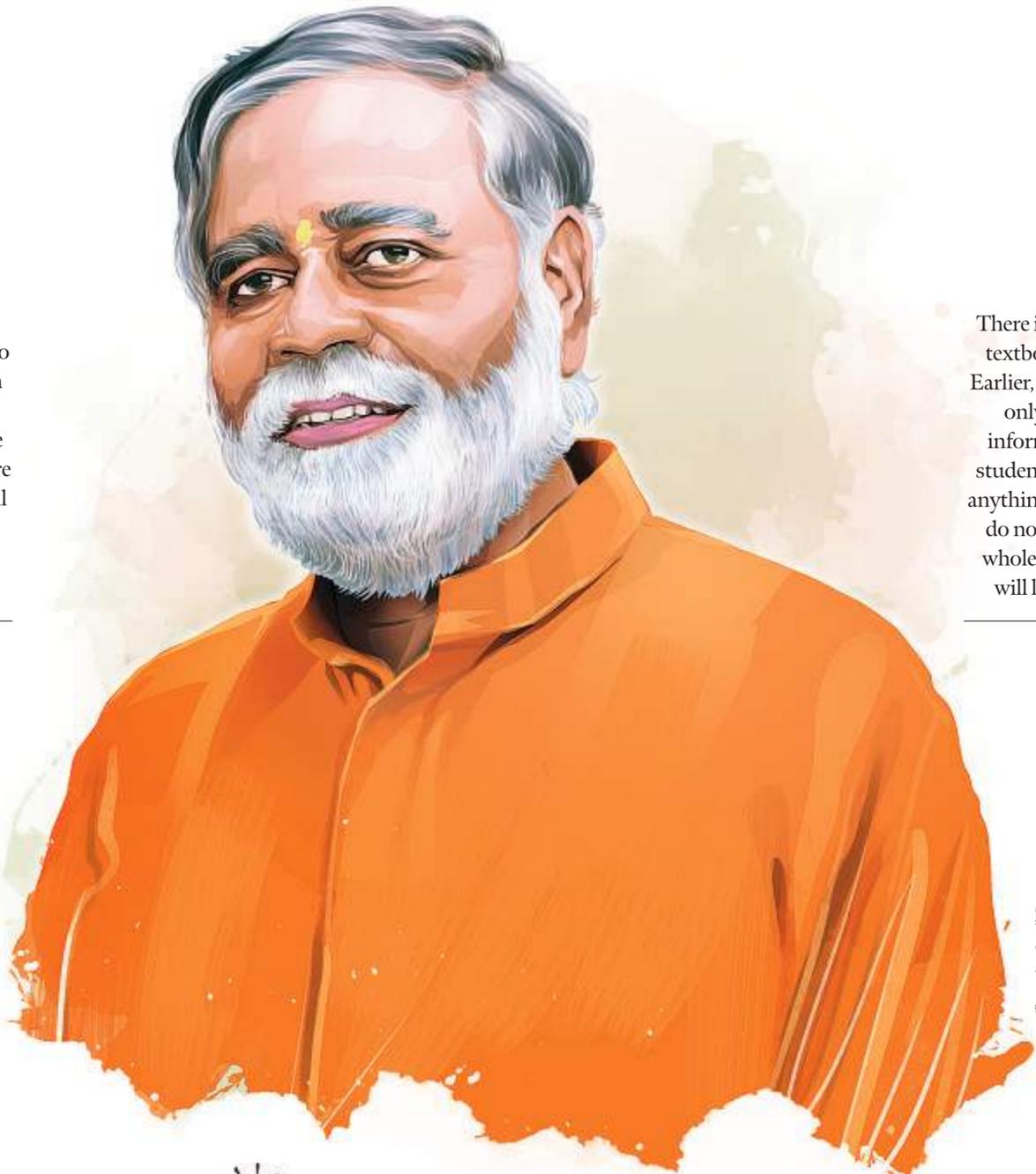


Illustration: Srujeet Dey

The Karnataka Education Act says no religious practice can be allowed in the school. So how come six students, who were following the rules till then, protested suddenly? We only fought for the Act

Sanath Prasad: Since you took over, there have been the *hijab* row in colleges, the textbook controversy, corruption allegations against the education department and much more. Has politics hijacked Karnataka's education reforms?

I think some people do not want quality education, in both government and private schools. There is a need to overhaul the system and we are just doing that. We have not taken action against anyone but every school should follow the regulation framework according to the Karnataka Education Act. We don't want to bypass the rules and acts, which are fair and democratic. So, it is the government's responsibility to see that institutions follow the same set of rules. Few institutions take permission to operate under the secondary board but teach the CBSE syllabus. Many parents have complained that till Class IX, children are not sure of the boards their schools are aligned with because authorities tell them at the last moment that in the absence of Central recognition, they cannot take the CBSE examination and better appear for the board exam. Some take permission for a Kannada medium school and then teach in English as the language of instruction. Yet at the time of the examination, they want the children to write their answers in Kannada. We have given an opportunity to all schools to right their record.

Sanath Prasad: What are your views about students wearing the *hijab* in pre-university? Do you think the controversy could have been avoided?

The stand taken by the government was upheld by the three-judge bench of the Karnataka High Court. The Karnataka Education Act clearly says no religious practice can be allowed in the school. So how come six students, who were following the rules and regulations of the Act all along, suddenly felt they had to wear the *hijab* the next day onwards? Who supported them? We fought only to uphold the Act.

Sanath Prasad: Your textbook revision policy was one of the most criticised. There was criticism that you did not take teachers into confidence, that you appointed a right-wing ideologue, Rohith Chakrathirtha, who was accused of not having a proper knowledge of history, to head the textbook committee. The Lingayat community, the Bunts and the Billava community in Dakshina Kannada were unhappy about the exclusion of Kayyara Kinhana Rai and Narayana Guru from history textbooks. Do you think that the education department failed to implement the entire textbook revision process correctly?

Any change will have its own objections. I think Chakrathirtha has not insulted our state anthem (matter is under investigation with cyber crime police). The older textbook committee was headed by Baraguru Ramachandrappa, who had made a satire on 'Janaganamana', our national anthem, in his book. (Ramachandrappa has since said that he used 'Janaganamana' as a satire to stand up

against the then-Congress government). Why don't critics see that? Besides, if they were genuine, they would not have spoken about Chakrathirtha. They would have commented on the content of the textbook. They said lessons on Bhagat Singh and Narayan Guru had been removed, which is not true.

Experts pointed out that social subjects have more lessons and are heavy. So we shifted chapters to Kannada. We've always studied about Akbar, Aurangzeb and Tipu Sultan, among others. We had not studied about freedom fighters who contributed to the nation's independence. When BS Yediyurappa was Chief Minister and Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri Education Minister, a new committee was formed on textbooks. What made the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government review the books, considering a textbook is revised once in 10 or 15 years? Yet no one questions Siddaramaiah. We had formed a committee, consulted around 300 experts and framed a new textbook policy that was even implemented till 2015. Yet a revision committee led by Ramachandrappa was framed in 2017. It removed certain contents in the textbooks. For example, there was a poem on the national flag, which was removed. A maharaja of Mysore had initiated development and social changes, which were revolutionary for his time. He had even constructed a dam in Karnataka. Why did they remove the chapter on him? Why did they bring in Tipu Sultan again? Did they bring religious content into textbooks or did we? We tried to present the truth.

There is a reason for textbook revision. Earlier, these were the only source of information for students. Now they can Google anything and get information from many



WHY BC NAGESH

BC Nagesh, began his political career with the RSS, before he joined the BJP in 1984. He was part of the Basavaraj Bommai government in 2021 and has since been in the news for the *hijab* controversy in junior colleges, changes in school textbooks and cultural referencing in the syllabus. As Minister of School Education, Literacy and Sakala of Karnataka, Nagesh encouraged the State Education Department to start the Kalika Chetarika programme to bridge the pandemic-induced learning gap among students of Classes I-IX in government schools, which is applicable for this academic year

trusted sources. Once students realise that our textbooks are not portraying the whole picture, then they will lose interest in studies. Our textbooks should inculcate nationalism and social responsibility in students. They should know how we got our freedom. We got freedom because of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. Now Savarkar had his own role in the freedom movement, like many others. But our textbooks had not mentioned it. I am not saying that everyone is against the nation but why is there such opposition to a holistic

picture of Indian nationalism?

Sanath Prasad: What about the Lingayat community that opposed Basavanna's chapter in the textbook?

The Lingayat community did not oppose it. Only a *swami* wrote to me saying there were a few changes in the Basavanna chapter. He said that the earlier Ramachandrappa committee had added a line saying how he removed the sacred thread he had got at the time of *upanayana* and then went to Kudalasangama, seeking *deeksha* or an initiation ceremony. But our textbook said after *upanayana*, he

went to Kudalasangama. We sent him both the books, one by Ramachandrappa and the other by Chakrathirtha. He wrote another letter saying both the contents were false. We asked him if we should continue with Ramachandrappa's version but he said no. The *swami*'s argument was that Basavanna had never sought *deeksha* from anyone although since 1965, the textbooks had been perpetuating what was a fallacy, according to him. We consulted him and a few experts from the community, then printed a new chapter.

Ramachandrappa had removed some chapters, too, but nobody had raised a question then. With Chakrathirtha, there's a flurry of questions. Many such things will happen because we are not status quoists. We are here for some purpose and that is to see the nation at the highest level in the world. So, there will be opposition.

Sanath Prasad: There has been a delay in distribution of school uniforms, shoes and socks to government school students. What is the progress so far?

We put out a tender in April for school uniforms and textbooks. The Ukraine-Russia war has disrupted many things in the country and in our state as well. Supplies of pulp, which we generally source from Russia and Ukraine, got affected. We also prioritised spends on Kalika Chetarika, besides nutrition, adding eggs, chikki and bananas to the regular midday meal. We concentrated on quality education and health. The pandemic slowed down approvals but the education department never refused funds for shoes and socks. I don't want to politicise education at all.

There is a reason for textbook revision. Earlier, these were the only source of information, now students can Google anything. If textbooks do not portray the whole picture, they will lose interest

We have prioritised students' health but we have not forced every student to take eggs. Those who don't want to eat them can have bananas or chikki, which contain more protein. Throughout the world, there are different views about eggs and non-vegetarian foods. I hope to see the day when we can give eggs to students across India. We will be giving eggs for 46 days a year.

Sukrita Baruah: In Delhi, a number of government schools and institutions allow students to wear the *hijab*. Have you thought about bringing the *hijab* and the turban within the ambit of the rulebook so that there's no question about violating uniforms?

That can open a Pandora's box. Some might say they cannot wear pants and would like to wear shorts. Some will say they want *kesari* (saffron) shawls. Should we allow them? We are only discussing the Act and rules. What did they say in court? They said that the *hijab* is our religious practice. Is school a place where religious practices should be allowed?

Pallavi Smart: What about the quality of teacher training?

The quality of education in Karnataka is unparalleled when compared to other states. We have mainstreamed students in 48,000 schools; they couldn't do so in the 900-odd schools in Delhi. No government can perform a miracle of this scale. We are doing our best to see that children get the best education.

Sanath Prasad: Some private schools have also continuously levelled charges of corruption against DDPIs and BEOs in the education department. What action are you going to take against offenders?

We are being vigilant and taking strict action. Administratively, we have digitised processes and made them transparent. So now the renewal of registrations and new registrations can happen online. The institutions need not go to the BEO and DDPI. They can file their applications online for verification. If there are objections, they will be notified and given an opportunity to rectify them. According to the Supreme Court order in 2017, every government has to bring about a law to ensure the safety of children, a fitness certificate for school buildings and regulate schools properly. We are just following the ruling. We, as a team, with a good principal secretary and good commissioners, are trying to set many things right. Did you know there was no rule to give an NOC for the CBSE system? Without a rule, both our department and schools were in an advantageous position. Some 16 notices have been issued to institutions, so far.

Kiran Parashar: How do you ensure the revised textbook PDFs reach government school students in remote areas, considering they do not have access to smartphones or computers?

I want to clarify that whenever a textbook is revised, it is not printed the same year. The tender process to print the revised textbooks starts in December. The 128 mistakes made by Ramachandrappa have been set right and the revised textbooks will be given to every school. Many are single-line corrections and teachers have been told. So, no student will be affected.

Kiran Parashar: When you said that "Savarkar flying out of cellular jail on a bulbul," is a metaphor. How do expect children to understand it?

Have you read Vivekananda? He appealed to 100 citizens with "iron nerves." It was a thought that Savarkar had while he was in Cellular Jail. Every line that a poet writes cannot be explained. We cannot question a poet's imagination.

18 ECONOMY

AMID SHARP DEPRECIATION IN RUPEE IN LAST FEW WEEKS

Foreign investors slow infusion into equities, over ₹8.6K cr in Sept so far

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

AMID THE sharp depreciation in the rupee over the past few weeks, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have eased the pace of investments in Indian equities, infusing a little over Rs 8,600 crore so far in September after they invested more than Rs 51,000 crore last month.

According to the data, FPIs have bought equity to the tune of Rs 8,638 crore during September 1-23.

The latest inflow comes following a net investment of Rs 51,200 crore in August and

nearly Rs 5,000 crore in July, data with depositors showed.

FPIs turned net buyers in July after nine straight months of net outflows, which started October last year. Between October 2021 till June 2022, they sold Rs 2.46 lakh crore in the domestic equity markets.

Foreign investor activity in September has been highly volatile, with alternate bouts of buying and selling.

They have sold on seven occasions in this month so far. In fact, in the last two trading sessions, they have pulled out Rs 2,500 crore from the domestic equity markets.

The 75-basis point rate hike

EXPLAINED
Fed stance, Re movement

THE US Fed's aggressive stance against inflation as well as the rupee's movement against the dollar were major factors that foreign investors based their investment decisions on, as they have significant impact on returns.

by the US Federal Reserve for the third consecutive time to control rising inflation and the surging

dollar have impacted FPI buying, Wealth Advisers LLP's Basant Maheshwari said.

"The US Fed's hawkish tone on interest rates and the fear of a global recession fuelled pessimism among investors," Shrikant Chouhan, head—equity research (retail), Kotak Securities, said.

Some experts added that the sharp depreciation in rupee as it touched all-time low of Rs 81.09 against the dollar does not augur well for foreign investments.

Foreign investors have been slowing down their equity buying in India since September.

The scenario turned adverse after a hotter-than-expected in-

flation report dashed hopes that the US central bank would scale down its rate hikes in the coming months.

The August US inflation edged 0.1 per cent higher from the preceding month to 8.3 per cent. However, it moderated compared to one year ago, when it was 8.5 per cent.

In addition, foreign investors have pumped in Rs 5,903 crore in the debt market during the month under review. Apart from India, FPI flows were positive for Indonesia and Philippines. On the other hand, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand witnessed outflows during the period under review. WITHPTI

INTERVIEW WITH MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS & IT

'EU's GDPR more absolutist, not possible for us ... our law will be clear on data misuse'

EMPHASISING ON the borderless nature of the Internet, Minister of State for Electronics and IT RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR said that the future of Internet regulation will need a harmonisation between the democracies of the world. In an interview with SOUMYARENDRA BARIK, he spoke about the upcoming legislations for the online ecosystem, why India may not follow Europe on data protection, and the issue of bots and algorithmic accountability of social media companies. Edited excerpts:

You have said that a new set of laws for the online space including data protection and a new Information Technology Act will be out soon. What is the status of these laws?

The digital economy is one of the biggest opportunities for India and a lot of what we are doing today is to accelerate that. The Ministry will soon come up with a set of laws, after extensive public consultation, that will serve as the guiding framework for the next ten years. Start-ups, young entrepreneurs and innovation will be an inherent part of the design of whatever we do.

But how will you ensure that the laws have enough regulatory legs while you allow start-ups some breathing space?

It is a false binary that there is a choice to be made between data protection and ease of doing business. Our architecture will effectively ensure that those are not binaries—that while citizen rights and consumer expectations of data protection will also be met, at the same time, we will make it easier for innovators to innovate in India and for investors to invest in innovators in the country to further grow the digital economy pie.

There has been speculation about dilution of the contentious data localisation norms in the new data protection Bill. There was significant pushback from Big Tech against these norms earlier. In retrospect, how is one to understand that pressure?

Sometimes the debate gets framed around the wrong issue. The issue is not localisation or free data flow. Rather it is protecting data of citizens and making online platforms accountable. We have set the boundary conditions of openness, safety and trust, and accountability for platforms and there is more than one way of ensuring that the data fiduciary is responsible for the security of the data principal's data.

There is also a reciprocal obligation on the data fiduciary to allow law enforcement agencies in the event of a criminal conduct to give access to that data.

How important is it for India to get adequacy status with EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)?

I don't want to say that it is not as important or it is as important. It is an important part of our discourse, because anything dig-



Rajeev Chandrasekhar File

... if a body in Europe comments about India's digital ecosystem, I would respectfully tell them that the days when we used to blindly accept somebody's view on digital matters as the holy grail are over."

ital and data is a multivariable equation. During the consultation, we will figure out whether the weightage is on adequacy, privacy, or ease of doing business. The GDPR is a little bit more absolutist in terms of how they approach data protection. For us, that is not possible, because we have a thriving ecosystem of innovators.

Europe seemed sceptical of the old data protection Bill. Its data protection board in a 2021 report had flagged that national security in our Bill was recurring, broad, vague, and used as an excuse to process personal data. We are currently exploring a trade deal with the EU. How should one look at that in the context of the withdrawal of the Bill?

India has the largest digital footprint globally and we are the ones with the most significant momentum in terms of being a player in the future of technology. So, if a body in Europe comments about India's digital ecosystem, I would respectfully tell them that the days when we used to blindly accept somebody's view on digital matters as the holy grail are over. We have very sharply defined views which we have laid out in public and are happy to engage with anybody because the future of Internet regulation will need a harmonisation between the democracies of the world since the fundamental nature of the Internet is borderless. I am hoping that under India's presidency of the G20, we can discuss that openly.

I have no problem today with there being some discourse about our approach not being consistent with somebody else's approach. I think that will happen for the next one or two years, before we all come to an agreement.

Over the last few years, the most stringent privacy- and platform-related penalties

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

on Big Tech companies like Meta and Google have been imposed by the EU. Do we have enough regulatory teeth to do something like that?

There is rampant data misuse by data fiduciaries, which includes Big Tech. On that, the law will be very clear that if you do that, there will be punitive consequences, in the shape of financial penalties. If there is misuse or non-consensual use of data or any breach, there will 100 per cent be penalties on companies. There also used to be a discussion about the individual citizen having to prove that a harm was committed. I am not particularly of that view.

Peiter Zatko, a former Twitter executive, has alleged that there was an Indian government agent working at the company. The government is yet to react to the claims...

Platforms use algorithms as a shield for intermediary conduct when algorithms are clearly being coded by people whose bias or lack of bias has not been tested. So, if we assume for a minute that the Twitter gentleman is right, you will have people who are either paid or have other ideological incentives that are coding algorithms which decide who is being muted or amplified. That is why I have been insisting on algorithmic accountability since 2018. It is a broader issue than Twitter.

There is no scrutiny on who is coding and it becomes more dangerous when a company hires someone with a dubious political background to code the algorithm. You can imagine the consequences.

Bots are another issue using which you can spread misinformation, child pornography, or defame someone. But it is impossible to prosecute them because they are bots. Having said that, I am not going to be drawn into an argument with somebody depositing 10,000 miles away.

How do you suggest regulating algorithmic accountability?

We have to figure it out. In my opinion, it is not acceptable that bots are not identified. When bots masquerade as a user, and then are responsible for criminal behaviour or user harm, it is a much deeper and important problem. We have some broad ideas, but a lot of those ideas depend on a relationship of accountability that will be defined by law.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

ADB: RBI may slow down on rate hikes till next year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

WITH ECONOMIC activity still to reach pre-pandemic levels, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may slow down the pace of rate hikes until next year to quell soaring inflation while supporting growth, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said.

The Manila-based agency has raised the inflation forecast for the current fiscal to 6.7 per cent from its earlier projection of 5.8 per cent. For the next fiscal too, the forecast has been revised upwards to 5.8 per cent from 5 per cent earlier. Inflation will remain elevated this year and the next, ADB said in an update to its flagship Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2022 report.

"This Update forecasts the inflation rate averaging 6.7 per cent in FY2022 (fiscal ending in March 2023) before moderating to 5.8 per cent in FY2023 (ending in March 2024), just below the central bank target range of 2



The Reserve Bank is likely to raise policy rates even though economic activity is still below pre-Covid trend, the ADB report said. File

-6 per cent," it said.

Even though supply pressures are expected to ease in the current fiscal year, upward pressure on inflation could continue because of demand-side pressures caused by increasing economic activity, as per the report.

It says the RBI is likely to raise policy rates even though economic activity is still below the pre-pandemic trend.

Mutual funds add 70 lakh investor a/c's in Apr-Aug

New Delhi: With increase in digital access and growing awareness about mutual funds (MFs), asset management companies (AMCs) have added close to 70 lakh investor accounts in the first five months of the current fiscal, bringing the total to 13.65 crore.

This came following an addition of 3.17 crore investor accounts in 2021-22 and 81 lakh accounts (or folios in mutual fund parlance) in 2020-21, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed. The sharp increase in MF folio count implies that a lot of new investors are coming into the capital markets and are embracing mutual funds as their preferred vehicle for investing.

As per the data, the number of folios with 43 fund houses rose to an all-time high of 13.65 crore in August from 12.95 crore in March 2022, registering a gain of 70 lakh during the period. PTI

393 infra projects show cost overruns of ₹4.65 lakh crore

As many as 393 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns of over Rs 4.65 lakh crore, as per MoSPI a report

OUT OF THE 647 DELAYED PROJECTS:

132	118	273	124
delayed by 1-12 months	delayed by 13-24 months	delayed by 25-60 months	delayed by 61 months and above



1,526 infrastructure projects — costing Rs 150 crore and above — which are monitored by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) as of August, among which

- 393 reported cost overruns
- 647 projects were delayed

Source: MoSPI/PTI

BRIEFLY
UK FTA

London: The free trade agreement (FTA) talks between India and the UK are now in their final phase and despite some outstanding issues to be resolved, there is optimism on both sides that the Diwali deadline for a draft will be met, said Vincent Keaveny, 693rd Lord Mayor of London, who represents the financial hub of the City of London globally.

Salesforce jobs

San Francisco: Salesforce India will increase its headcount in the country to 10,000 by next January from 7,500-plus currently, said its chairperson & CEO Arundhati Bhattacharya. She said in the order of priority, the focus areas for Salesforce are BFSI, manufacturing, services & social services. PTI

Grab, layoffs

Singapore: Grab, Southeast Asia's biggest ride-hailing and food delivery firm, does not envisage having to undertake mass layoffs as some rivals have done, and is selectively hiring, while reining in its financial service ambitions. Grab, a household name in Southeast Asia, had about 8,800 staff at the end of 2021. REUTERS

OIL FY22 profit

New Delhi: Oil India Ltd (OIL), at its 63rd annual general meeting, said it saw its highest ever profit after tax at ₹3,887.31 crore during FY22, a growth of 123% over last year, with substantial rise in earnings per share at ₹35.85.

Tanishq Alekhyia

New Delhi: Jewellery retailer Tanishq has announced the launch of its festive collection 'Alekhyia'. The price range for products under Alekhyia collection starts at ₹70,000 onwards. ENS

Off-road & family-on-board: 5-door Jimny set to raise Suzuki's SUV game

ANIL SASI
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THERE IS no turbocharger, no torque diesel or a hybrid powertrain assist. Yet, for a car with a boxy shape, sub-compact dimensions and a focus on basic functionality that has endured four generations of vehicles spanning half a century, the Suzuki Jimny can end up punching way above its bantamweight category to give pedigreed off-roaders a run for their money, the Mercedes G-Wagon and the Jeep Wrangler included.

So, with a right-hand drive, heavily camouflaged Jimny test mule spotted over the last week on the Gurgaon-West Delhi roads ahead of its 2023 launch, enthusiasts are more than excited. A longer 5-door spec of the budget off-roader is the one headed to India, a full three years after the original 3-door version was unveiled at the 2020 edition of the Delhi Auto Expo. While the 3-door version is currently manufactured by Suzuki in India, it is aimed at only the export markets. The official India debut will be made by the more practical, 5-door version that continues to be based on a rugged steel ladder frame chassis, with its new stiffer construction supporting rigid front and rear axles with separate differentials, but with an extended wheelbase to accommodate the added length.

First released by the Hamamatsu-based Japanese 'kei' car specialist in 1970, the Jimny has sold nearly 3 million units in over 190 countries, and continues to rake in sales volumes across markets with its fourth-generation model.

The off-roader, equipped with Suzuki's AllGrip 4-wheel-drive tech, may be barebone basic, while combining the engineered mechanics of the sub-compact car's chassis with the practicality of a daily-use urban car, with the result that it's equally trusted by speedcar pros rallying in the Dakar rally as it is



via Suzuki Global

JIMNY THROUGH THE YEARS

FIRST GENERATION - 1970-1981

Debutted with a tiny 360 cc engine in Japan's competitive kei car market. It was a global hit and formed the basis of the core chassis for later Jimny to come

SECOND GENERATION - 1981-1998

This version was designed to target a more urban market,

with a more sophisticated persona that was a runaway hit. The Gypsy was a longer-wheelbase version of the second gen car that debuted in India

THIRD GENERATION - 1998-2018

The exterior design received a fresh, curvy makeover, even as the urban appeal was made more compelling,

while not compromising on the off-road characteristics

FOURTH GENERATION - 2018 ONWARDS

The new 5-door Jimny (pictured above) builds on urban appeal, while staying tough on the off-roading proposition. The longer wheelbase 5-door version is set for the India debut and a global launch early next year

by deliverymen ferrying cargo in London's tightest alleyways or Japan Post workers delivering mail on the snow-clad twisties of Hokkaido's northernmost prefectures.

India has had a tryst with the longer wheelbase version of the second generation Jimny, which Maruti Suzuki called the Gypsy here. In terms of dimensions, the 5-door version of the fourth-generation Jimny headed here will be around 3,850 mm in length (nearly the length of the Suzuki Swift and a tad shorter than the new Brezza).

It will be 1,645 mm in width and 1,730 mm in height (same as the 3-door version), but is likely to have a wheelbase of 2,550 mm (an increase of 300mm over the stock 3-door variant). Ground clearance of the 5-door version is likely to be 210 mm, again the same as the 3-door version, though the breakover angle is likely to change on account of the increased length.

The 3-door version is claimed to have an approach angle up front

of 37 degrees, the breakover angle in the middle of 28 degrees and a departure angle at the back of 49 degrees, numbers that are actually better than the comparative figures for a Jeep Wrangler.

Under the hood, Maruti Suzuki is likely to replace the K15B 1.5-litre petrol engine doing duties in the 3-door version with the new K15C DualJet naturally-aspirated engine for the new Jimny here, mated to either a five-speed manual or a six-speed torque convertor automatic gearbox. Suzuki's mild-hybrid tech that is featured on the new Brezza, as well as the Neodrive versions of the new Toyota Hyryder and the mild-hybrid models of the Grand Vitara, is likely to be on offer. The Jimny is also set to be equipped with the Suzuki AllGrip drive system.

The SUV may not have a direct competitor in India, but it will face-off with the bigger Mahindra Thar (which is gearing up with a 5-door version) and the Force Gurkha utility vehicles. The 5-door will decidedly up-

grade the Jimny from being a recreational off-road option into a practical, family car. While Maruti Suzuki is likely to pitch the new 5-door Jimny as a family car that can go off-road as well, there are two major concerns: the ride quality, where the second-gen Gypsy did not inspire much confidence; and the lack of bells and whistles that are pretty much standard on other vehicles in the price range that the Jimny will be positioned in.

There is speculation that the Jimny's prices could overlap with higher variants of the Brezza (no excise benefits despite its under-4 metre length, though, as the engine is bigger than the mandated 1.2 litre petrol).

There is a chance that Suzuki could badge the 5-door Jimny as the Gypsy or, in keeping with the Grand Vitara tradition, the Grand Gypsy, but nothing officially from Maruti Suzuki yet. The Jimny 5-door will be a global model and is likely expected to make its India debut at the Delhi Auto Expo 2023 in January.

MARKET WATCH

SEVEN OF TOP-10 COS LOSE M-CAP

New Delhi: The combined market capitalisation (m-cap) of seven of the 10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 1,34,139.14 crore last week, with Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit. Last week, the Sensex lost 741.87 points or 1.26 per cent. PTI

Why WADA continues to put cannabis in banned drugs list

NIHAL KOSHIE
SEPTEMBER 25

In September last year, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) said it was reviewing the status of cannabis, which is prohibited in competition. This followed the positive test of USA's sprinting star Sha'Carri Richardson during the US Olympic Track and Field trials in June. She was banned and missed the Olympics. However, on Thursday WADA said the recreational drug would remain on its list.

Is an athlete at risk of getting banned if she or he ingests marijuana?

Cannabis is sourced from the cannabis sativa plant. There are over 500 chemical substances in the plant but the one on Wada's prohibited list is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC gives users of marijuana the high. So, cannabis in Wada's books is marijuana, the chemical in which is THC.

So, an athlete can test positive for cannabis when not at a competition and not incur a ban?

Yes. Cannabis is banned only in-competition. This means that an athlete faces a risk of getting banned only for a positive test from a sample collected during a competition. For example, an athlete can smoke marijuana in the off-season and test positive but is unlikely to be banned.

How long can an athlete be banned?

From 2021 onwards, a positive test for cannabis can result in as short a ban as one month, according to Wada. For a reduced ban; down from two to four years earlier, athletes must prove that the use of cannabis was before entering a competition, which means the athlete did not intend to experience its effects while competing. Under the Wada code, cannabis is defined as a 'substance of abuse'.

Has Wada also increased the permitted levels of cannabis in the body?

Wada says the current limit of 150 nanograms per millilitre in urine will be found in athletes who are frequent users and are impaired because of the effects of cannabis. The threshold limit in 2013 was just 15 ng/ml.

Is cannabis performance enhancing in sports?

Cannabis is known to delay fatigue, mask pain and improve concentration but at the same time can increase heart beat which is not good, says Dr PSM Chandran, the former director (sports science) of the Sports Authority of India. Dr Chandran, who has been part of anti-doping panels, said, "Cannabis, like all drugs, has its pros and cons but it is still unclear if it can help an athlete. There are studies which show it can reduce motor movement."

Evidence of an increasing number of run-

From 2021 onwards, a positive test for cannabis can result in as short a ban as one month, according to Wada

ners using cannabis during training was documented in the book Runners' High by Josiah Hesse. A research paper titled 'Cannabis in sport, anti-doping perspective' says there are benefits for athletes such as 'improved oxygenation to tissues, improvement of vision for goalkeepers, and muscle relaxation'. Cannabis can also reduce anxiety, fear, and tension, the paper says. "Athletes under the influence of cannabis indicate that their thoughts flow more easily and their decision making and creativity is enhanced; others claim that cannabis improves their concentration or reduces pain," the paper, which Wada has cited in the past as evidence, states.

Did Richardson's positive test lead to calls to remove cannabis from the prohibited list?

Richardson, 22, emerged as the next big star when she clocked 10.72 seconds in the 100 metres in Lausanne in August last year. She also won the US Olympic trials in Oregon, incidentally a state where use and possession of recreational cannabis is legal for anyone over 21. Richardson told NBC in an interview that she used marijuana after she could not control her emotions on hearing about the death of her biological mother from a reporter while at the trials. Richardson was brought up by her grandmother. One of the many prominent athletes who wanted WADA to cut Richardson some flak was former 400 metre world record holder Michael Johnson. "I don't know why marijuana is banned. Maybe a good reason. Maybe not. I know how it feels to lose a parent. Indescribable pain! I'm from the same neighbourhood as @tskerri Tough place!" Johnson had tweeted.

How did Wada go about the review?

Wada in its statement said that nine independent experts (List Expert Advisory Group) including those in pharmacology, forensic toxicology, pharmacy, sports medicine, chemistry, endocrinology, internal medicine, regulatory affairs and hematology had conducted the review of the status of cannabis in the prohibited list. Potential to enhance performance, health risk to athletes and the spirit of the sport are the criteria these experts looked at. A substance needs to meet two of these three criteria to be included in the prohibited list.

The expert advisory group reviewed scientific studies, published surveys and testimonies of athletes who used cannabis. Wada says that use of cannabis violates the spirit of the sport but didn't specify which of the other two criteria the recreational drug met.

No power at home, but powering ahead

Ashakiran has grown up in poverty, but it hasn't stopped her from winning Youth Natl gold in 800m

ANDREW AMSAN
SEPTEMBER 25

WHEN ASHAKIRAN Barla won the 800m title at the recent Youth Nationals in Bhopal, she wanted to share the joy with her mother back home in Jharkhand. But the 15-year-old had to wait for almost two days to even speak to her mother at their home in Naxal-affected Gumla district. The reason is best explained in Ashakiran's own words: "Jab bijli hi nahi hai toh phone kaise hoga? (How can my mother have a phone when we don't even have an electricity connection yet?)."

Ashakiran's home in the Adivasi village of Nawaidh, about 100km from Ranchi, is yet to receive an electricity connection despite several pleas to local authorities. "My mother got the news about my medal from a neighbour and she called from their phone. She didn't even know that I had travelled to Bhopal for the competition," says Ashakiran, who trains under coach Ashu Bhatia at his residential academy in Bokaro.

Ashakiran, who is currently the U-18 season leader in Asia, clocked 2:08.45s to bag the gold at the Bhopal Nationals and also seal a spot at next month's Asian Youth championships in Kuwait.

She was head and shoulders above the other competitors in the race and finished eight seconds (approximately 60m) ahead of silver medallist Laxmipriya Kisan of Odisha. The 2022 Jr Cali Junior World Championships semifinalist's timings at the competition were better than the gold-winning effort at the 2019 edition of the Asian Youth Championships held in Hong Kong.

"She is a very talented girl and comes from an extremely humble background. Her father passed away when she was very young and her mother raised her and her three siblings in tough conditions. Even before I started training her, she had incredible natural strength that I later realised was a result of backbreaking work in village fields. She is extremely dedicated and never skips training," says coach Bhatia, a former Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) in the Sikh Regiment of the Indian Army.

Coach's role

Bhatia started coaching Ashakiran four years ago when both were part of the Jharkhand State Sports Promotion Society's (JSSPS) academy in Ranchi. But COVID lockdowns and restrictions disrupted the programme.

Bhatia started his own academy in Bokaro about a year and a half ago and has about 70 students, of whom 90 per cent are from Adivasi communities.



Ashakiran Barla (extreme left) with coach Ashu Bhatia and her siblings at their home in Gumla district of Jharkhand. (Above) Ashakiran with mother Rosalia Anne

As soon as hostel facilities were set up at his academy, he wanted to get Ashakiran, who had gone home to her village post Covid, back to training. In normal circumstances, he could have just rung up Ashakiran's mother. But Bhatia had to accompany another senior coach on an arduous and eye-opening journey to the athlete's village.

"It's a very remote place. We had to get down at a stop around 11 km away from her village and make it through fields and forest coverings to finally reach her home. When we reached there, we realised how tough their condition was. They just have one room, not even a separate kitchen," he says.

Ashakiran says that her mother has been running after local authorities for years to provide them with an electricity connection but has now almost given up. "My mother has been trying ever since my dad passed away in 2019, but the officials kept giving us different excuses. Earlier they said we did not have a ration card and kept rejecting our form when we applied," says Ashakiran whose village, as per the 2011 census, has a female literacy rate of just over 25 per cent.

Her elder sister Florence, 21, is also a

promising athlete who won gold medals in the 200m and 400m at the 2022 All India University Championships in Bhubaneswar. For the Barla sisters, athletics is not merely a sport but a chance for the family to escape poverty. Things were a bit better until her father, a school teacher, passed away in 2013 after a battle with cancer.

"I still sit and weep in my hostel room thinking about the state of my family. I remember my mother used to cook just one meal of rice and a watery sabzi in the morning. We have slept on empty stomachs on numerous occasions. Meat was a luxury we could afford just on festivals and special occasions," says Ashakiran. Things have still not changed yet for her family or the village. None of the households has a running water connection. The village well, about 2km from her house, is the only source of water. The nearest hospital is 25 km away.

Initiation

Ashakiran doesn't quite remember what ignited her passion for running. When she started, she had little idea about athletics. When she received her first pair of spikes, a gift from a nun at the local

church, she was initially confused. "Isme toh kante lage hai (But these shoes have spikes)," she told sister Divya Jojo immediately.

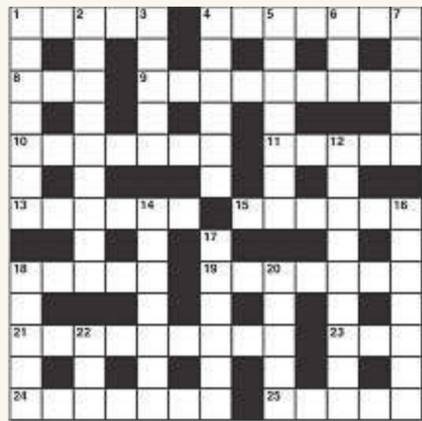
"I didn't even know that such shoes existed and that they were compulsory to compete at national meets. When I first tried them on, I couldn't even stand upright. I had only used flat-soled canvas shoes till then," she says.

Ashakiran, who has won three junior national level gold medals this season alone, hardly gets time to visit her home these days.

But even when she does, there is a lot of planning involved. "We have just one bus that halts at a stop about three kilometres from home. I try to go home during the weekly bazaar at Gumla so that I can hop onto the back of a truck. Walking home from the town is risky since there are bears and elephants in the forest. I have seen them while working on the fields on so many occasions," she says.

Despite facing such hurdles, Ashakiran hasn't stopped dreaming big. She wants to represent India at the Paris Olympics. But her immediate and more pressing concern is: "I hope I get an electricity connection soon".

CROSSWORD 4856



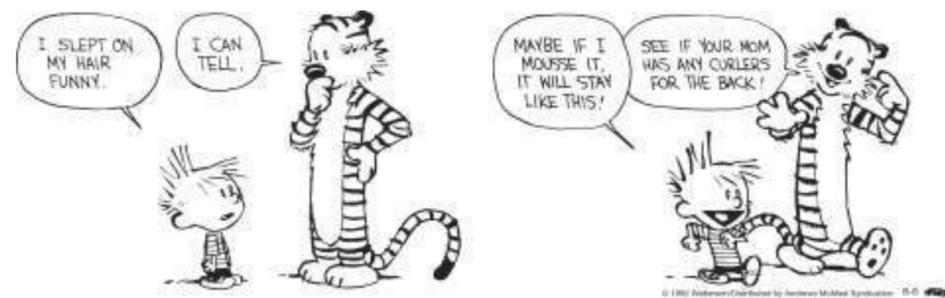
- ACROSS**
1 Over-slender (5)
4 Experience is less than energy (7)
8 Massaging the middle may prevent it (3)
9 Irregular hours that are needed to negotiate (6,3)
10 Take a liberty (7)
11 Provoke audible quarrels (5)
13 It comes as a sudden blow (6)
15 Way of acting (6)
18 The mark of a beast marks the trail (5)
19 Canada's ratable exchange (7)
21 He may explain changes to incomes (9)
23 Colour of a sunshade? (3)
24 Stop being loyal (7)
25 Keyhole operation (5)
- DOWN**
1 Family members in good order? (7)
2 A bitter draught for assembled Argonauts (9)
3 Minor performer put on the bill? (5)
4 Allow more line to run out to the fish (6)
5 Justify rate (7)
6 South American river port (3)
7 An out of the way sort of route (5)
12 A leading light in the cinema? (9)
14 What people do when they retire makes one wild (3,4)
16 Granted, it might be searched (7)
17 More than a capital district (6)
18 Contrives to produce injury we hear (5)
20 Club he joined to go swimming (5)
22 Eggs are said to be done (3)

Solutions Crossword 4855: Across: 1 Peppy's Diary, 8 Teach, 9 Teenage, 10 Options, 11 Inter, 12 Gorgon, 14 Bauble, 17 Theme, 19 Noticed, 21 Umbrage, 22 Blind, 23 Wells Fargo, Down: 2 Exactor, 3 Yahoo, 4 Detest, 5 America, 6 Yeast, 7 Befriended, 8 Thoughtful, 13 Overall, 15 Backing, 16 Inlets, 18 Elbow, 20 Tibia.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



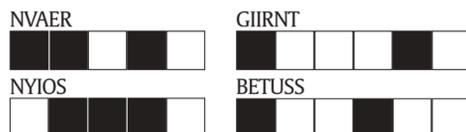
MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Never trust people's... always judge of them by their actions
- Ann Radcliffe (10)



Difficulty Level 4s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4968



Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
A set of controversial lunar alignments is bound to make you aware of differences of approach at work. You may, in point of fact, become embroiled in an argument with colleagues yourself, unless you take careful evasive action. Give a partner the benefit of the doubt, even if it goes against the grain.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
Check up on the financial situation, and don't hang around if family members need putting right about who pays for what. You probably won't reach a lasting agreement, but that shouldn't stop you arguing your corner. You could do well in interviews and discussions at work, by the way.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Venus' curious motion is taking you back to the past, evoking memories of former loves. In many respects that's no bad thing, although there are certain indications that you'll begin the day on the wrong foot. You must realise that nothing is final and that everything can be changed.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
It's a day for differences of opinion, and that goes for all twelve signs. Yet in your case it does seem very likely that you won't really understand what's being said, so you may be well advised to bide your time. Patience is an admirable virtue.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
The Sun and Moon are gradually moving towards another enthusiastic alignment. Therefore, when you come to look at today's arrangements and offers, you should bear in mind that your ideas, thoughts and actions may not make sense for another few days.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
Mercury, your planetary ruler, is sowing the seeds for some truly amazing ideas and meetings, but you will have to put the brakes on within a few days. If you now insist on carrying your ideas to their logical conclusion, you may end up in the middle of nowhere.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Strangely enough, a current development may be so secret that not even you know what's going on. Indeed, it looks as if you are about to be overwhelmed by forgetfulness. You may entertain yourself by associating with unusual people and visiting new places.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
Do spare a little time to sort out all those nagging cash questions, especially if other people are involved. Only when the Moon settles down next week will a public or professional problem be solved. Until then you may have to make do with half an answer.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)
The Moon's various challenges to your sign will bring criticisms from partners and people you live with. This could be exceedingly helpful, although it may be annoying when other people claim to know best, the fact is that they may indeed be right.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Do keep yourself busy, but don't lose sight of the larger picture. The events and questions which concern you at work may be downright trivial compared with the wider ethical and moral issues. Success will count for little if you alienate partners in the process.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
Now that a financial arrangement is going into reverse you must be very wary of seductive promises and cast-iron guarantees. There is very little to gain from taking risks today, and nothing to be said for taking loved ones' lasting support for granted.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Partnership is everything. Yet you will have to be very patient from now and for the next three weeks, for it looks likely that someone will try to duck out of a commitment. The fact that they may have very good reasons won't make their behaviour any less irritating.

I feel like I have nothing to lose because no matter if I win or lose, I'm going to go home, and my kids are going to ask what's for dinner."

KEIRA D'AMATO,
AMERICAN MARATHON RECORD HOLDER

BRIEFLY

MCC approves
Deepti's run out

London: The MCC, the guardians of the laws of cricket, on Sunday stamped its seal of approval on all-rounder Deepti Sharma's run out of Charlotte Dean at the non-striker's end which saw India win the third women's ODI against England here. India managed to pull off a win as Charlotte Dean (47), the last England batter, was adjudged run out in controversial fashion, for backing up. Dean was out of her ground and Deepti simply held the ball to remove the bails, leaving the English team flabbergasted. **PTI**

Kuldeep's hat-trick
helps India A to win

Chennai: Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav's sensational hat-trick and Prithvi Shaw's quick-fire half-century (77) set up a four-wicket win for India 'A' against New Zealand 'A' in the second unofficial ODI to clinch the three-match series here on Sunday. Electing to bat, New Zealand 'A' were all out for 219 in 47 overs as Kuldeep picked up the last four wickets, including the hat-trick. From 210 for 6, the visiting team collapsed to 219 all out as Kuldeep ran amok. After dismissing Sean Soia for his first scalp of the match, Yadav picked up the wickets of Logan Van Beek, Joe Walker and Jacob Duffy to complete a memorable hat-trick. India 'A' chased down the target with 16 overs to spare to notch-up a series-clinching win, reaching 222 for 6 in 34 overs. **Brief Scores: NZ 'A' 219 all out in 47 overs (Joe Carter 72, Rachin Ravindra 61, Kuldeep Yadav 4/51) lost to India 'A' 222 for 6 in 34 overs (Prithvi Shaw 77, Sanju Samson 37, Shardul Thakur 25 not out, Logan van Beek 3/46) by four wickets.** **PTI**

Samsonova wins 3rd
WTA title in 2 months

Tokyo: Liudmila Samsonova of Russia extended a remarkable summer run by clinching her third title in two months after beating rising Chinese player Zheng Qinwen 7-5, 7-5 at the Toray Pan Pacific Open on Sunday. No. 30-ranked Samsonova won in Washington and Cleveland in August and also reached the fourth round of the U.S. Open. The 23-year-old has now won 18 of her last 19 matches and didn't drop a set in Tokyo. "It's amazing. I think I need a little bit of time to realize it, but it's unbelievable," Samsonova said. **PTI**

Bhavani to test skills
in National Games

Metz: First Indian fencer to qualify for the Olympics, Bhavani Devi is looking to test her new techniques and strategies during the National Games and use them at the big-ticket events ahead. The 29-year-old, who won the gold medal in the Commonwealth Fencing Championship last month, will be one of the attractions at the multi-sport event in Gujarat. "I have changed my coach, my technique, my strategies, everything is changed now. We have more important events, like the Olympic qualification in April. So I need to work on my strategies. I have to apply them on all my opponents, both beginners and experienced ones and see how it works," she said during a virtual interaction conducted by SAI. "Sabre is a very quick sport, you can't take time in between touch, you can't think and decide what you want to do in those milliseconds." **PTI**

SKY opens chase, Kohli closes it

Bowling worries persist, with Bhuvneshwar & Co. blown away in Powerplay in absence of new ball movement

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
SEPTEMBER 25

IN THE last third of his 48-ball 63, Virat Kohli hit just one boundary, but it was a critical one - a six over wide long-on off the first ball of Daniel Sams' last over of the chase with 11 runs needed. A squirted outside edge for four by Hardik Pandya past short third man off the penultimate ball gave India the T20 series 2-1 in Hyderabad, the six-wicket win sealing a fine comeback after Australia had steamrolled them in the Mohali opener.

Nevertheless, heading into their last contest ahead of the T20 World Cup - series against South Africa - some of the old worries persist. In the absence of any significant movement with the new ball, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Co. were again blown away in the Powerplay by the looming presence of Cameron Green, who bashed 52 off just 21 balls. India did well to claw back from a start of 56 for 1 in four overs. But from a position of 140 for 6 after 17, the 18th and 19th overs from Bhuvneshwar and Jasprit Bumrah cost them a collective 39, as another strapping batsman, Tim David, hauled the Australians to 186 for 7 with a 27-ball 54.

The chase seemed to stall as soon as it had begun, with Australia using the hard lengths to good effect on a ground where banging the ball into the surface makes life hard for batsmen in the Indian Premier League, given a somewhat sticky surface and a substantial outfield. KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma were gone by the fourth over when Suryakumar Yadav walked in and grabbed control of the chase like only he can in this format.

During his 36-ball 69, Yadav pretty much hit the ball where he pleased, except the last delivery he faced, when he failed to clear a jumping wide long-off. There was an outrageous on-the-up punch from outside leg stump off Daniel Sams that sailed into the second tier over extra cover. There was a nonchalant chip-and-flick to Adam Zampa that ended way beyond wide long-on. The glorious Test stars of the Australian firmament, Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood, were thumped with disdain over deep midwicket, whether on-pace or off-pace.

Kohli alternated between trying to slog the ball out of the ground, something that never came off, and picking his areas and timing the lofted boundaries, which he pulled off with class. As Suryakumar overtook him at searing pace, he sensibly turned



Suryakumar Yadav played some stunning shots during his 36-ball 69 that included five sixes and as many fours. **PTI**

the strike over to his partner during their 104-run third-wicket stand that consumed only 62 balls.

However, Suryakumar's exit at the end of the 14th meant India began to huff and puff, even with only 53 needed off 36, until Pandya walked outside off and helicoptered Hazlewood over a leaping David at long-on off the first ball of the penultimate over. Given Suryakumar's dominance, they would've perhaps liked a cleaner win, but at least batting isn't their weaker suit at the moment.

Green scorches the turf

From the very first ball of the game, Green came hard at India. He appears to have the tools to become a really difficult batsman to bowl to in T20. When Bhuvneshwar tried to swing one into him, he displayed super-fast hands, especially for such a tall man, hunker-

ing down on the incoming delivery and flaying it over deep square leg.

When Bhuvneshwar predictably went shorter and wider next, he punished him through the covers. He hits off the back foot with power both behind and in front of square, and his massive reach converts even the defensive wider deliveries into sitting-duck boundary options.

Even a bowler like Bhuvneshwar, whose strength is to attack the stumps or operate in the corridor in the Powerplay, was reduced to going farther and farther away from Green's swinging arc. He even conceded a wide, but the tactic worked eventually as Green sent a steeper soaring off a thick edge to be caught by backward point running back.

Having stopped Green's charge, India pulled things back nicely, chiefly through Axar Patel, who found some purchase from the strip and got a few deliveries to stop on

the batsmen, consuming Josh Inglis and Matthew Wade. He also ran out Glenn Maxwell with a direct hit from the deep.

Bhuvneshwar began promisingly at the death, landing some yorkers on target but David's reach took over ultimately as he powered sixes down the ground off full deliveries. Australia also played Bumrah well, taking 50 off his four overs. There was none of the slight hesitation that keeps batsmen pegged back against his awkward, heavy deliveries. Rather, they read him accurately, slogging his slower wide ones for boundaries, and Sams even scooping an on-pace full delivery over short fine leg for four. It was down to Harshal Patel to come up with a superb last over to restrict the late damage.

Brief Scores: Australia 186 for 7 (David 54, Green 52, Axar 3-33) lost by six wickets to India 187 for 4 (Suryakumar 69, Kohli 63, Sams 2-33)

The emotional Axar

AXAR PATEL was a riot of emotions. One moment, he would be throwing his hands in the air in anger. Next second, he would be holding his hands aloft in joy. He would slump to the ground in frustration; then the next ball he would leap in the air in ecstasy.

Cameron Green disdained him—five fours in total—but he didn't let the onslaught ruin his day. He terminated the well-set Josh Inglis and Matthew Wade in the same over after he had dismissed Aaron Finch and effected the run out of Glenn Maxwell. Wade's wicket turned him delirious, since he had been Australia's most devastating batsman in the series, but also because it was a clever piece of bowling and a sharp fielding. Released from wide off the crease, the ball angled in, it landed back of length and stopped at the batsman to fox his attempted punch. The edge floated in the air, but it seemed destined to fall safely before Axar flung towards his left to snaffle the catch, before his emotions burst forth.

EMOTIONAL
ROLLERCOASTER

Hot heads, calm minds and everything in between at the game

Surya plays for the team, even when on 45

THE GAME'S old hands have a 'team player' test - deciding if a batsman is on the pitch for personal milestones or ensuring a win. In case a batter in 40's knocks the ball around as he is approaching 50, he gets the dubious label of "selfish" from the dressing room. And then there are those who have the team's cause on their mind regardless of the score they are playing on. Surya Kumar Yadav belongs to the second category - you would have seen the awe in Virat Kohli's eyes whenever the two met mid-pitch to punch gloves after the Mumbai Mauler had sent one more proper good ball over the fence. At Hyderabad, leading a tight chase, Surya didn't bother being in 40s. At 45 he hit Adam Zampa's low full toss for a wristy six - a risky shot but it didn't matter to Surya as the rate was climbing. Next ball? Six again. Matthew Hayden, from the commentary box, called Surya's on-his-toes riding the bounce



six off Sams as the shot of the tournament but in the long run it was the six off Zampa when on 45 that would matter to India more.

Virat Kohli, the new
(six) hitman

VIRAT KOHLI projects himself as a reluctant six-hitter. He is (perhaps deliberately) under-selling himself. He might not be as languid a six-hitter as Rohit Sharma or as audacious as Suryakumar Yadav. But he can hit humongous ones himself (one of every 24 balls he faces is not a sorry record; Rohit Sharma's is a marginally better 21). But of late, he has turned the ignition on his six-hitting. In the last four games, he has struck one every 12 balls. The last of them realistically knocked Australia off the game. India required 11 off the last over, and with a neat swing over long on off the first ball from Daniel Sams, he slashed the equation to a manageable five off as many balls. He does most of his six-hitting business from the crease. A half-stride forward, a full step back, a high back-lift, an emphatic downswing and the ball shooting off the willow like the crack of a rifle.



Green, red hot

A FULL T20 game or a truncated eight-over-a-side one, Cameron Green's sole intention is to hit every ball out of the ground. The first ball he faced in the game was a full-ish, out-swinging ball from Bhuvneshwar Kumar. He was in no mood for sighters of feelers. He swung hard and wild at the ball, but only managed to miscue the ball to extra cover. He was undeterred by the failure. The next ball veered onto his pads and he ferociously cracked it for a six over square-leg. The next ball was thundered through covers, like a right-handed Matthew Hayden. The introduction of spin could not unshackle him either—he would just rock back deep into the crease, manufacture some room for himself, and use his long reach to slap boundaries. Not even Jasprit Bumrah fazed him—he coolly picked a couple of sixes and a four. One of the sixes was a pull shot wherein he fetched the ball from outside the off-stump over midwicket. A shot that few dare to imagine against the masterly seamer.

'Still more in my legs': Kipchoge after rewriting own world record

NEW YORK TIMES
SEPTEMBER 15

TWO QUESTIONS come to mind any time Eliud Kipchoge toes the starting line of a marathon.

At what point in the race will Kipchoge, who before Sunday had won 14 of the 16 official marathons he entered, leave the rest of the field fighting for second place? And are the conditions such that he could shatter his own world record again?

On a sunny morning in Berlin, Kipchoge, a 37-year-old Kenyan, answered both questions unequivocally, winning the Berlin Marathon for the fourth time, in 2 hours, 1 minute, 9 seconds, a world record.

The world record he broke was his own - 2:01:39 - set four years ago on this course.

The field went out at a fast pace, with Kipchoge joined by five runners who hit a 10-kilometer split of 28 minutes, 22 seconds, a sub-two-hour marathon pace.

Midway through, the group had dwindled. Only Andamlak Belihu of Ethiopia was

with Kipchoge as they hit the halfway point, in 59:51, an incredible half-marathon split in itself. That was the plan, Kipchoge said.

The race shifted around 25 kilometers, or about 15.5 miles, when the pacers left the course and Belihu dropped behind Kipchoge. The pace slowed, by Kipchoge's standards, at least, but was still well within world-record range. By the time Kipchoge ran through the finish line at the Brandenburg Gate, the result was clear: The world record would be shattered by about 30 seconds. He slapped his chest as he went across the line and almost seemed to surprise himself as he ran into the arms of his longtime coach Patrick Sang. Kipchoge looked at his wristwatch as if to confirm it all.

Second place was a few minutes behind, with Mark Korir of Kenya finishing in 2:05:58. Tadu Abate of Ethiopia came in 2:06:28, and Belihu faded to fourth.

Kipchoge has no equal in the distance and now counts 15 marathon wins to his name.

In 2019, in Vienna, he became the first person to run a marathon in under two hours, though his time of 1:59:40 was not recog-

nized as a record because he ran on a controlled course with professional pacers. Last year, he added an Olympic gold medal to his collection after a commanding win at the Tokyo Games, becoming only the third man to win back-to-back gold medals in the event. He does not intend to slow down. He plans to defend his Olympic title at the 2024 Olympics in Paris. "There's still more in my legs," Kipchoge said after the race.

In the women's race Sunday, Tigist Assefa shocked the field by running away with the win in 2:15:38, shattering the course record by almost three minutes. The time makes Assefa, a 28-year-old Ethiopian, the third-fastest female marathoner ever.

Assefa, a former 800-meter runner who competed at the 2016 Olympics, has run only one other marathon. Her debut in the distance was in March at the Riyadh Marathon, in Saudi Arabia, where she ran 2:34:01 and finished in seventh place.

Rosemary Wanjiru of Kenya finished in second place Sunday with a time of 2:18:00, a remarkably quick debut marathon time. Tigist Abayechew of Ethiopia finished in third

with a time of 2:18:03. Keira D'Amato, who went into the Berlin Marathon as the No. 1 seed, having set the American women's record, 2:19:12, at the Houston Marathon in January, finished in sixth place with a time of 2:21:48.

She came into the race as somewhat of a hero to the everyday runner and as a notable favorite in a field that rarely sees an American at the top of the seeded lists.

A 37-year-old mother of two, D'Amato left the sport in 2009 and returned in 2017 to run a marathon for fun with her husband. She has since beaten her college 5-kilometer time by a minute, set a 10-mile American record and signed a sponsorship deal with Nike. "I'm just having fun," she said in an interview Friday at the Brandenburg Gate. She took a photograph with Kipchoge, giving him bunny ears.

"I feel like I have nothing to lose because no matter if I win or lose, I'm going to go home, and my kids are going to ask what's for dinner." Both Kipchoge, a father of three, and D'Amato will be going home to proud children.

LONG DISTANCE GOAT

When Kipchoge first broke the world record in 2018 he knocked off a massive one minute and 18 seconds from the previous mark. The two-time Olympic champion shaved off another 30 seconds on Sunday.

SECOND HOME: Kipchoge has taken a liking for Berlin. His previous world record also came in the German capital city. He has won the Berlin Marathon four out of five times (2015, 2017, 2018, and 2022)

PERFECT 10: Kipchoge recorded a 10-win marathon streak between 2014 and 2019. Fellow legends Abebe Bikila and Haile Gebrselassie could only manage a best streak of 6 wins.



"Most important thing is my mind, and that also feels fresh and young. I'm so happy to break the world record." - Eliud Kipchoge

WORLD RECORD PROGRESSION

2:01:09	Eliud Kipchoge (KEN) 2018
2:01:39	Eliud Kipchoge (KEN) 2018
2:02:57	Dennis Kimetto (KEN) 2014
2:03:23	Wilson Kipsang (KEN) 2013
2:03:38	Patrick Makau (KEN) 2011